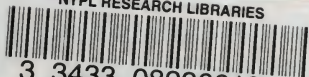


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THE
L I F E
OF
H A N N A H M O R E:
WITH
NOTICES OF HER SISTERS.

BY
HENRY THOMPSON, M. A.
(ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.)
CURATE OF WRINGTON, SOMERSET.

“—— Fu giusta, e saggia, e forte ;
Onor del sesso ——
Donna che fuor della volgare schiera
Il Ciel già diede al secol nostro in sorte;
Donna che altrui fu norma, e norma solo
Di sè dando a sè stessa, in sè preserisse
Leggi agli affetti, e frenò l'ira e 'l duolo;
Donna che, in quanto fece, e in quanto disse,
Tanto levossi sopra l'altre a volo,
Che mortal ne sembrò sol perchè visse.”
FILICAJA, Sonnetto xxviii.

9-
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I:

PHILADELPHIA:
E. L. CAREY & A. HART.

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TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,
VICTORIA,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
QUEEN,
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH,
&c. &c. &c.

MADAM,

THE gracious and condescending permission which Your Majesty has granted me to prefix your name to this Volume, seems to require, while it encourages, an explanation of the circumstances which induced me to solicit so exalted an honour.

As one of the most distinguished ornaments of her sex, the memory of Hannah More, I felt, could no where be more appropriately cherished than in the heart of Your Majesty; as the steady supporter and zealous maintainer of the throne, the record of her loyalty might hope to repose in its shadow;

as the eloquent advocate and diligent propagator of the Protestant Faith held by the Church established in these realms, to none could the narrative of her life look so hopefully for countenance as to the Defender of that Faith, and the temporal Head of that Church. While the history of one who was the approved and accepted monitress of youthful Royalty, might hope, however humbly and respectfully, to win from Your Majesty one favourable regard.

That Your Majesty may long and happily live to cherish, guard, and govern those sacred institutions, and to protect that holy religion, of which Hannah More was through life the advocate and defender, is the fervent prayer of,

MADAM,

Your Majesty's most loyal subject,

and most obedient

and grateful servant,

HENRY THOMPSON.

P R E F A C E.

THE following pages have been written at the suggestion of several of Mrs. More's earliest and most valued friends, who wished themselves and the public to possess, collected in the compass of one small volume, such particulars concerning her as were treasured in numerous living memories, and dispersed in various collections of private correspondence;—sources becoming daily less accessible. From his local situation, and external facilities, the writer was thought to possess advantages for the task, which others, however better qualified in other respects, could not equally command. Though himself unacquainted with Mrs. More until after her retirement to Clifton, (having come to reside at Wrington about six months after her departure from Barley Wood,) he could not become the minister of a parish in which she had resided nearly half a century, without constantly associating with many who had long known her intimately; and, in the course of his ten years' ministry in that parish, he has also become well acquainted with several

more of the same privileged class in Bath, Bristol, and Clifton. The information supplied by these unexceptionable witnesses was represented as an ample nucleus to which it might be reasonably expected that intelligence from more distant quarters might be gathered. Nor was the "*relligio loci*" altogether to be disregarded. Insensate indeed must be the heart which could encounter daily, and almost hourly, some memorial of the greatness and goodness of a human mind, and yet feel no interest in its history. In almost all the neighbouring parishes there exist schools or clubs, instituted or suggested by Hannah More. Her tributary verses call the visiter of many a surrounding village church to be wise, and meditate his end; and in Wrington, every spot is her footstep. The walls which rose beneath her eye, and within which she meditated in solitude the writings which are the property of an admiring world, or held immediate and familiar intercourse with the greatest spirits of her generation; the trees planted by her hand; the scenes arranged and embellished by her taste; the memorials erected beneath her care; the frequent Bible, Prayer-book, or other religious work, found on the peasant's shelf, bearing his name in her writing, "from Hannah More;" these, or some of these, are the objects which meet the minister of Wrington in his daily walk; while the same association, elevated in accordance with the day, pervades his sabbath duties. It was in the church of Wrington that Hannah More, for many sabbaths, mingled her prayers with those of most of the present congregation; it was here that, in presence of her lifeless remains, the Church proclaimed, in St. Paul's own words, "*Jesus and the resurrection*;" it is here that her virtues are recorded in needless but honourable marble; and, at the distance of a few

yards, her mortal part awaits immortality. To meditate the life of Hannah More, and to find pleasure in the meditation, seems no more than natural on ground so redolent of her memory.

Induced by the possession of these advantages, the writer has endeavoured to use them faithfully. That he entertains a very high admiration for the character of Hannah More, he has no where concealed; but his object has not been to write a panegyric, but a fair and accurate record of facts. Should it seem otherwise to any reader, it should be remembered that several of those who knew Mrs. More best, and who had witnessed her conduct under severe trials, attested that they never had seen so near an approach to perfection. Nothing is here mentioned without authority; and though it is by no means asserted that every minute statement is rigidly correct, the writer, notwithstanding, hopes that such will be found to be the case. The indication of any error he will gratefully receive, and, should another edition be called for, correction shall be given.

The materials are principally derived from two sources: private letters and living memories. The writer takes this opportunity of returning his most grateful thanks to the kind friends who have so liberally supplied him.

To the family of the late Mr. Cadell, he is indebted for the loan of upwards of one hundred and sixty letters of Mrs. More, comprising nearly the whole of her correspondence with her publishers, and throwing much light on the history of her publications.

To R. Lovell Gwatkin, Esq., one of the very earliest friends of Mrs. More, he is indebted for the loan of upwards of eighty letters written by her and her sisters, and by some friends of the family; for several original pieces;

and for copious memoranda, written, while at Barley Wood, by Mr. Gwatkin and his daughter. These papers supply information connected with every part of Mrs. More's life, and, both in extent and importance, are a most valuable accession to the work.

To Mrs. Simmons, widow of the late Capt. Simmons, and one of Mrs. More's *pupils*, and most intimate friends, the writer is indebted for much oral information; to her sister, Miss Lintorn, for the communication of several letters; to her daughter, Miss Simmons, for information on several points; and to her son, John Lintorn Simmons, Esq., Mrs. More's executor, for the list of her bequests.

To Mrs. Freeman, of Becket House, Northampton, also a pupil of Mrs. More, the writer is obliged for much miscellaneous information.

The Rev. Hill Dawe Wickham, M. A., of Frome, very obligingly contributed upwards of ninety original letters of Hannah More and her sisters; and his sister, Mrs. Col. Fawcett, of Mendip Lodge, most kindly examined great numbers of others, and selected such as proved useful.

Haviland John Addington, Esq., of Langford Court, and his sister, Miss Addington, very obligingly communicated nearly 100 letters addressed by Mrs. More to their late father, the Right Hon. J. H. Addington.

To W. Upcott, Esq., of Islington, the writer is indebted for the permission to search his vast collection (perhaps unrivalled by that of any private individual) of materials for recent and contemporary biography. Mr. Upcott has also very obligingly communicated several papers bearing on the subject.

To Samuel Baker, Esq., of Aldwick Court, to Colonel Daubeney, K. G. V., and to the Rev. Thomas Hartwell

Horne, B. D., F. S. A., the writer gratefully acknowledges the loan of several scarce and useful books illustrative of this biography.

To the Bristol Philosophical Institution, and to the Bristol City Library, he most gratefully acknowledges his obligation for their handsome and unreserved disclosure of their literary stores to his inspection.

Mrs. Randolph, of Bath, and Mrs. James, of Wrington, both intimate friends of Mrs. More, have very obligingly examined great part of the manuscript, and attested its accuracy.

For various oral communications, letters, and papers used in this work, the author returns his grateful thanks to Lord Teignmouth; William Gray, Esq.; Mrs. Woodward; J. S. Harford, Esq., of Blaise Castle; the Rev. John Boak, M. A., prebendary of Peterborough; the Rev. Thomas Brockman, M. A., rector of St. Clement's, Sandwich; the Rev. Charles Forster, B. D., perpetual curate of Ash next Sandwich; Mr. Tyson, of Bristol; Mrs. Whalley (relict of the late Rev. R. C. Whalley;) Miss Frowd; and several others, whose contributions are far from being the least valuable, but who will not, the author regrets, permit him the satisfaction of a public acknowledgment.

If the writer has possessed such advantages as might seem to justify him in acceding to the wishes of his friends and to his own inclinations, he has also experienced some inconveniences, for the results of which he hopes he may obtain indulgence. Distance from the press and from larger libraries, and impossibility, from a similar cause, of oral communication with many of Mrs. More's friends, have, doubtless, operated to render his volume inevitably inferior to what it might have proved under circumstances more favourable in these respects.

To conclude: as the writer is anxious that his book, though small, should be what it professes to be, a *Life* of Hannah More, omitting no circumstance of real importance or interest, he will feel most grateful for the communication of any *well-authenticated* additional facts, in case the public should be disposed to call for another edition.

H. T.

Rectory, Wrington,
13th June, 1838.

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L I F E

OF

H A N N A H M O R E.

CHAPTER I.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. *Prov.* xxxi. 29.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he wilt not depart from it. *Ibid.* xxii. 6.

IN whatever sense the appellation GREAT can be legitimately applied to any human being, history perhaps will not furnish one name more truly deserving the appendage than hers who is the subject of these pages. Does the name belong to *those who have raised themselves from obscurity to eminence?* Behold the daughter of an humble schoolmaster elevated by her own industry and merit to be the favourite and caressed associate of all that was distinguished in contemporary rank

and literature! May the title be earned by *the abstract importance of achievements!* We claim it for her whose ambition was contented with no lower object than the amelioration of human hearts, and the salvation of human souls. Is it conferred by *the extent of operations?* The benefactions of Hannah More were limited to no class, to no country; and, in respect of time, extended over the period of half a century: and her writings will continue to exercise a wide and deep influence on mankind to latest generations. They have already effected a moral revolution, not merely on the surface, but in the inmost vitals of aristocratic and middle life. They were extensively influential in calming the passions and correcting the delusions of a misguided populace in times of turbulence and discontent; and from them many a cottage still continues to derive a little treasure of religious knowledge, piety, and economy. They are read in almost every language of the globe, from the shores of the Arctic Ocean to those of the Indian, and from the Mississippi to the Ganges.¹ Her *personal* exertions altogether changed the moral conduct of the labouring classes within their influence, and abated, if not annihilated, by

¹ "Cœlebs" was translated into the Icelandic, "Practical Piety" into the Icelandic and Persian, and the "Sacred Dramas" and "Feast of Freedom" into the Cingalese. Large impressions of all her works have been sold in America. Other translations will be occasionally noticed. Most of Hannah More's writings have appeared in all European languages possessing a literature.

experimental demonstration, the popular prejudice against the religious education of the poor. May greatness be measured by *the disproportion of physical powers to results*? These mighty consequences were wrought out by a female; a female too of peculiarly delicate constitution, and rarely experiencing immunity from actual disease.¹ Is greatness discovered, not in the resignation of things which we profess to despise, but in *the calm surrender of all that taste and inclination would retain, and the voluntary encounter of all that revolts them, for the accomplishment of some great and worthy object*? Hannah More sacrificed every variety of personal gratification to the object she kept in view. If we would not allow her indifferent to admiration, of which no woman ever received a greater share, and certainly none more deservedly, we must yet

¹ How truly Hannah More could have appropriated the expression of Pope, "that long disease, my life," can only be estimated by those who were privileged with her intimacy for any length of time, and by those who, like the writer, have examined a voluminous correspondence of herself and sisters, which continually refers to such a state of health as would have been considered by most persons a reasonable excuse for total inaction. Not only general derangements of the system, but paroxysms of the severest pain, are adverted to in letters which contain the details of some of her greatest intellectual and corporeal exertions. She stated to a friend in 1819, that she had suffered under "more than twenty mortal disorders." It may be, perhaps, more acceptable to the reader to state this fact generally, than to multiply quotations from letters which could only give him the same information; although some instances will necessarily occur in the course of the narrative.

allow that she withdrew, of her own accord, from its luscious atmosphere to the rude climate of misconception and obloquy. But, indeed, she did much more. She retired from circles in whose converse she delighted, and from friends whose society was the balm of her life,—from the solemn and exalted companionship too of the immortal departed, whose communion none enjoyed with intenser ardour,—and she engaged in intercourse with spirits from whose contact her nature revolted, from whom she could only expect opposition and persecution; she endured personal labour, exhaustion, and indignity; and all this in pursuance of the noblest end ever contemplated by the most insatiate ambition;—the everlasting welfare of mankind. Above all, does true greatness consist, as the Scripture expressly affirms, in *pursuit of the glory of God*? Must the wisdom of the sage, the wealth of the rich, and the power of the mighty, yield their glory to him who glorieth in the Lord?¹ Then was Hannah More great: for she had wisdom, riches and power;—power of the most effectual and influential kind;—and she laid all these unreservedly on the altar of her God, and at the feet of her Saviour. Her aims were eternal and universal.—A woman, she surrendered admiration; a valetudinarian, she sacrificed personal ease; a friend, she resigned the endearments of friendship; a scholar, she relinquished

¹ See Jer. ix. 23, 24; 1 Cor. i. 31; and 2 Cor. x. 17.

the pleasures of literature;—that she might “turn many to righteousness.” Such qualifications will constitute the most valid title to greatness, when the “mighty hunters” of the earth,

“From Macedonia’s madman to the Swede,”

must bring their claims to another tribunal than the superficial opinion of a misjudging world.

HANNAH MORE was born at the hamlet of Fishponds, in the parish of Stapleton, Gloucestershire, about four miles from Bristol, on the 2nd of February, 1745. Her father, Mr. Jacob More, was born at Thorpe Hall, Harleston, Norfolk, to expectations of high respectability, being regarded as heir to a mansion and estates at Wenhas-ton in Suffolk. He was accordingly educated at the grammar school of Norwich, of which Dr. Clarke, brother of the celebrated Dr. Samuel Clarke, was then head master. The inheritance was, however, contested at law by a cousin, whose suit proved successful, and Mr. More was thus sent forth into the world to procure a subsistence by his own exertions. He set out in life as supervisor of excise in Bristol; but, being, as his distinguished daughter simply, but expressively, describes him, “a man of piety and learning,”¹ he soon interested Lord Bottetourt in his favour, and was, by that nobleman’s influence, established in the mastership of the free school at Fishponds.

¹ Statement furnished by Mrs. More to the publishers of “The British gallery of contemporary portraits.”

Shortly after his settlement in Gloucestershire, Mr. More married Mary, daughter of Mr. John Grace, an humble but most respectable and religious farmer; by whom he had five daughters,—Mary, Sarah, Elizabeth, HANNAH, and Martha.

The fourth of these gave early indication of intellectual power. When her mother began to teach her reading, it appeared that observation had already enabled the infant Hannah to acquire some proficiency in the art; and, when she was about four years old, she had actually composed a satirical *poem* on Bristol, descriptive of the Bristol road, beside which her father's house was situate. Two verses are yet in the recollection of her early friends, and they are, it is to be feared, all that time has spared of a trifle so curious and interesting. They are as follow:

“This road leads to a great city,
Which is more populous than witty.”

At the same age she received from the clergyman of the parish, the first sixpence of which she was mistress, for repeating her catechism in church with perfect accuracy. Her love of literature continued to manifest itself, not only in perusing with great avidity the books which her father's slender library supplied, but in the composition of poems, essays, and imaginary correspondence. At eight years old she received her first lessons in Latin; her father being desirous not only to cultivate the fine abilities of his child, but also to qualify her, together with her sisters, for the management of a ladies' school upon principles more

befitting the requirements of responsible and reasonable beings than those which generally obtained in such establishments at that time; where girls

“Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye,”¹

were trained, however paradoxical the assertion may seem, not *to be wives* but *to get husbands*; to attract the admiration of the wealthy, rather than fix the afflection of the good; to run, like comets, the eccentric orbit of dissipation, rather than to rest, as warming and cheering suns, the centre of the tranquil and orderly domestic system. In perfect accordance with such views, every acquisition that implied *a mind* was then supposed to be essentially masculine; the Latin language itself, necessary as it is to a critical understanding of our own, and to a liberal and intelligent study of our native literature, was held to be so constitutionally male, that a lady who had boldness enough to attempt the acquisition was, in public opinion, tantamount to a Camilla or a Clorinda. By a strange inconsistency, intellectual pursuits were denounced as incapacitating woman for domestic duties, while the whole bent of female education lay towards adapting her for every place but home.² Even

¹ Paradise Lost, xi. 574.

² This contradictory practice is admirably satirized in “Cœlebs,” where the hero, finding the domestic arrangements of a widower friend very ill managed, concludes that his daughters must be mistresses of Latin, and that so much negligence may even imply Greek! But in asking the eldest her opinion of

spiritual acquirements were regarded too exclusively the heritage of man to be invaded by the feebler sex. A practical Mohammedanism prevailed; women were educated as destitute of minds and souls, and if destined for another existence at all, as only to figure there in the character of Houris. Mr. More, like many other sensible men, had not energy enough to disclaim opinions which few dreamed of questioning; and accordingly he was not without a considerable horror of *learned ladies*. But his good sense and parental feeling corrected his practice. Accordingly, he educated the *minds* of all his daughters; and as Hannah's talents were manifestly of superior order, he did not scruple to combine with the study of Latin, some elementary instruction in the mathematics; a fact which her readers might very naturally infer from the clear and logical cast of her argumentative writings.

It is not unlikely that a reminiscence of this valuable parent supplied some features to her "Mr. Stanley," the father of Lucilla in "Cœlebs." In the xxxixth chapter, which is altogether occu-

Virgil, he finds her reading limited to "Tears of Sensibility," "Rosa Matilda," "Sympathy of Souls," "Too Civil by Half," "The Sorrows of Werter," and "The Orphans of Snowdon;" while the sister is only acquainted with "Perfidy Punished," "Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy," "The Fortunate Footman," and "The Illustrious Chambermaid." "I rose from the table," says Cœlebs, "with a full conviction that it is very possible for a woman to be totally ignorant of the ordinary but indispensable duties of common life, without knowing one word of Latin; and that her being a bad companion is no infallible proof of her being a good economist."

piet in the discussion of female education, and which well repays a studious perusal, Mr. Stanley says, "I am a gardener, you know, and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent, or at least propensity; for parents are apt to mistake inclination for genius. This propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract instead of encouraging the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction. Lucilla having a strong bent to what relates to intellectual taste, I have read over with her the most unexceptionable parts of a few of the best Roman classics. She began at nine years old; for I have remarked that it is not learning much, but learning late, which makes pedants. Phœbe, who has a superabundance of vivacity, I have in some measure tamed, by making her not only a complete mistress of arithmetic, but by giving her a tincture of mathematics."

The mental constitution of Hannah More combined those of Lucilla and Phœbe, and Mr. More, in consequence, combined the two departments of learning. His efforts for the benefit of his children, and of those who might afterwards be committed to their trust, were blessed incalculably beyond his warmest expectations. In 1757, the eldest Miss More, then in her twentieth year, under the patronage of numerous friends, opened, in conjunction with her sisters, a boarding-school in Trinity

Street, Bristol. The superior character of the religious and mental education afforded in this establishment soon obtained for it a very high reputation, which the expanding abilities of Hannah contributed not a little to enhance. It became *fashionable*; and schools of similar constitution began to multiply. And if to this we add the influential writings of Hannah More on female education, it may be no exaggeration to assert that the great moral revolution which has taken place in this important province is largely attributable to the judgment and diligence of *one* pious and affectionate father in humble life. The record of such instances would still be valuable, if it only tended to eradicate that pernicious "voluntary humility," which is the mere refuge of indolence,—the pretext for inaction drawn from obscurity of station or meanness of ability. No man has a right to say he can do nothing for the benefit of mankind; who are less benefited by ambitious projects than by the sober fulfilment of each man's proper duties. By doing the proper duty in the proper place, a man may make the world his debtor. The results of "patient continuance in well doing" are never to be measured by the weakness of the instrument, but by the omnipotence of Him who blesses the sincere efforts of obedient faith alike in the prince and in the cottager.

When Hannah had completed her twelfth year, she was tolerably conversant with French. This accomplishment she had acquired from her eldest sister, who had used to go thrice a week into

Bristol to take lessons in the language, and instruct her sisters afterwards. So diligently did the eldest Miss More labour in this endeavour, that she spoke the French language with the fluency of a native: and she has been known even to faint beneath the exertion of her day. One of the state prisons, during the war, being at Stapleton, Mr. More occasionally received at his house the French officers on parole. On these occasions Hannah was the general medium of communication. She derived from the masters of the school an acquaintance with the rudiments of Spanish and Italian, in which she afterwards made critical proficiency.¹ Her talents soon attracted the attention of various distinguished literary persons; among whom were Dr. Sir James Stonhouse,² Dr. Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, (from whose tracts many hints are borrowed in "The Wealth

¹ A translation from the former of these languages will be found in the Appendix (I.) She also translated a Spanish poem, called "Las Lagrimas de San Pedro."

² This gentleman and his lady were among her most intimate early friends and patrons. Sir James, at a very early period of her life, predicted the triumphs of her genius. He was for some time physician to the General Infirmary at Northampton, and his writings for the spiritual benefit of the sick are well known from their circulation through the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. He afterwards took holy orders, when he was presented to the rectory of Great and Little Cheverel Wilts. He removed to Bristol for the benefit of his health, which a visit to the waters had greatly improved. His piety was equally fervent and sober, and his judgment was of great use to his gifted friend in her selection and estimate of religious and theological works. Some verses of Hannah to him hitherto unpublished, will be found in Appendix (II.)

of Nations,") Ferguson the astronomer, Dr. Woodward, a physician of high repute in Bristol, and Mr. J. Peach, a man of extensive reading and correct taste.

But on none had the acquirements of the youthful scholar made a stronger impression, and to none was the school more indebted for celebrity and patronage, than to Mrs. Gwatkin,¹ a lady of considerable influence and fortune in Bristol. To evince her grateful sense of this lady's kindness, Hannah, in her seventeenth year, composed the pastoral drama of "The Search after Happiness." Among other constituents of female education in those times, "plays, and those not always of the purest kind, were acted by young ladies at boarding-schools."² In the spirit of one whose riper years were destined to the purification and advancement of female instruction in its graver departments, our youthful heroine appropriately began with that which most closely verges upon recreation. As "The Search after Happiness" was to be performed by ladies exclusively, the characters are all female: but this circumstance detracts little from the effect of the piece, which is rather moral than dramatic: while, as the work of a girl of seventeen, the literary merits of this trifle are astonishing. It is interesting to observe its author "*qualis ab incepto processerit.*" Religion is the soul of this little drama. Vanities and

¹ See Appendix (III.).

² Preface to "The Search after Happiness."

amusements, literary pleasures, the indulgence of romantic sensibilities, and the torpor of mental indolence, are here severally pursued as the path to happiness; and all found devious. Religion alone is exhibited as infallibly conducting to the desired object; and the poem concludes with those noble verses,—

“Fountain of Being, teach us to devote
To thee each purpose, action, word, and thought!
Thy grace our hope, thy love our only boast,
Be all distinctions in the Christian lost!
Be this in every state our wish alone:
Almighty, Wise, and Good! Thy will be done.”

Shortly after the composition of this poem, the sisters had prospered sufficiently to enable them to build a house on a more extensive scale, which was the first erected in Park Street, Bristol. The order and management of the establishment, together with the superior quality of the education afforded, rendered this school the most celebrated of its kind in the kingdom. It comprised upwards of sixty pupils; and twice the number might have been easily entered, had the accommodations admitted. The Land's End, and the Highlands of Scotland, contributed at once to its supply. It is pleasing to record the filial gratitude of the sisters. They now took a house and garden for their excellent father at Stony Hill, Bristol, and kept two female servants to attend on him. Their substance, thus dedicated, was blessed and increased. The school advanced in reputation, and patrons multiplied. Hannah's talents were known, not

only through the commendation of friends, but especially through the celebrity of "The Search after Happiness," of which many transcripts had got abroad.

In 1763, the elder Mr. Sheridan was at Bristol, delivering his lectures on oratory; when Hannah evinced her delight at the first of these by addressing the lecturer in the following extemporaneous verses:—

"If music's charms can 'sooth the savage breast,'
And lull the busy cares of grief to rest;
If magic numbers, if the Muse's art
Can please the raptur'd sense, and reach the heart,—
What nobler charms in eloquence are found,
Where wit with music, sense unites with sound!
Oh could my unfledg'd muse the theme define,
The well-earn'd praise, O Sheridan, were thine!
'Tis thine to harmonize the ruffled soul,
To raise the mourning, and the gay control.
Not the dry precepts of unnatural rules;
Not the dull pedantry of modern schools;
But ev'ry grace that precept ever taught,
By fair example to perfection brought.
Polite as praise, as honest satire keen,
As beauty graceful, and as truth serene;
Correct as science, elegant as wit,
As reason powerful, and as fancy sweet.
No inharmonious cadence gives offence,
But ev'ry varied sound conveys the varied sense.

How every ear upon his accents hung,
When sacred¹ truths flow'd graceful from his tongue!
When Philip's son roused by the poet's lyre,
With generous transport caught the martial fire.
The infectious warmth could gentlest souls engage,
And every mind partakes the warrior's rage:

¹ Alluding to the scripture pieces which he read.

But when the scenes are chang'd to soft distress,
And gentler themes demand a gentler dress,
Contagious softness roughest breast could move,
And flinty souls are melted into love.

The book-learned parson, and book-keeping cit,¹
With senseless gravity, and saucy wit,
By impulse irresistible attend,
And little wits their sour attention lend;
With sparing thrift bestow their scanty praise,
Whilst candour crowns him with Apollo's bays."

Mr. Sheridan was highly gratified with the approbation of one who, though so young, was so intelligent an auditress; he eagerly sought her acquaintance; and thus was another distinguished accession made to the band of her literary friends.

Among the pupils of the Misses More were two young ladies of the name of Turner, whose cousin, Edward Turner, Esq. was then residing about six miles from Bristol,

"Where beauteous BELMONT rears her modest brow
To view Sabrina's silver waves below;"²

a situation of peculiar beauty, considerably improved by all that wealth and taste could contribute to its embellishment. The neighbouring hamlet is called "Failand;" which our youthful poetess, in her "Bleeding Rock," interprets *Fairyland*; but whatever may be the true etymology, the beauty of the surrounding scenery is unquestionable. To the local attractions of Belmont Mr. Turner added those of a cultivate dmind and

¹ Individuals, it is believed, were here intended.

² "The Bleeding Rock."

refined conversation. His house was, in consequence, the favourite resort of the young, in whose society he took much pleasure. His cousins, of course, were constant guests at Belmont during their vacations, and they were permitted to ask their friends to accompany them. The two youngest governesses, Hannah and Martha, being about the same age with themselves, were often thus invited. The cultivated intellect and elegant taste of Hannah were well calculated to make an impression on her accomplished host. He consulted her on the ornamental economy of his estate; and much of the artificial beauty which still belongs to it acknowledges her creative taste. The "Inscription on a Cenotaph in a Garden," (Works, vol. ii. p. 66,) still appears, though slightly varying from the revised form in which she published it, on the monument erected by Mr. Turner to the memory of his friend Joseph Farrell, Esq.; and at the summit of a steep woody eminence, ascended by a straight path, and commanding a wide range of varied scenery, a board still bears this inspiration of her Muse, which may seem to the classical reader an amplification of a noble passage in Hesiod,¹ though it is very unlikely that Hannah was then familiar, even through her native tongue, with the meditations of the old Ascræan.

¹ Της ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάραιθεν ἔθηκαν
 ἀθάνατοι μακρὸς τε καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτήν,
 καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον· ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηαι,
 ρηιδίῃ δὲ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπῇ περ ἰούσῃ.

Hesiod, Op. et Di. I. 287.

“ O you who pass these sylvan glades,
Embower'd in cool refreshing shades,
Allow, beneath this spreading tree,
One moment to morality.
When lab'ring up the steep ascent,
Your eyes upon this summit bent.
Toilsome and long the way appear'd,
And you the undertaking fear'd;
Yet as you near and nearer drew,
The labour lessen'd to your view;
And when this calm recess you've gained,
You wonder that the thought had pain'd.
'Tis so with virtue: when we see
From far the sweet divinity,
Her distant radiance we admire,
But think the tedious road may tire.
'Tis true she is with roses crown'd,
Yet intervening thorns are found.
At length, determined to pursue
The object that enchants our view,
With noble resolution arm'd,
By hope inspir'd, by glory charm'd,
Despising vice, contemning rest,
We venture, persevere,—are blest.

In the grounds at Belmont there is a picturesque rock exhibiting in some parts red spots of sandstone; this readily suggested to the imagination of Mr. Turner's guest a mythological explanation; and to it we owe a graceful imitation of Ovid, which its authoress entitled “The Bleeding Rock.”

Mr. Turner found his friend so agreeable and valuable a companion, that, although there was a disparity of more than twenty years, (Hannah being then twenty-two,) a matrimonial offer was the consequence. Mr. Turner was accepted; and

Hannah, preparing to become the wife of a man of large property, renounced her share in the school, and incurred considerable expenses. The day was now fixed for the marriage ; but, before its arrival, Mr. Turner, very unaccountably, postponed it. When the day thus newly appointed came, a second postponement was proposed from the same quarter; and afterwards a third. The matter was thus protracted for about six years. Hannah's elder sisters, and Sir James Stonhouse now interposed, and prevailed with her to renounce the alliance of a man who was capable of treating her with so much caprice. On this communication Mr. Turner still expressed the hope that he might not be considered as absolutely discarded ; but, finding Miss More firm, he offered to settle an annuity upon her by way of compensation for the injury she had suffered through his waywardness ; a proposal which was promptly and decidedly declined. Mr. Turner then sought an interview with Sir James Stonhouse, to whom he renewed the offer of the annuity, saying, at the same time, that he would marry Miss More at any hour the doctor would call upon him to do so, if only her consent could be obtained. Sir James, having consulted with some other friends on both sides, agreed to accept for Miss More the sum of two hundred pounds per annum. The subject of this negotiation was altogether ignorant of its existence until it was concluded, and she then refused to become a party ; but the importunity of Mr. Turner and the friends who had conducted the arrange-

ment at length prevailed on her to consent where farther resistance might be thought ungracious and resentful. Mr. Turner, indeed, always entertained the most respectful friendship for Miss More. His first toast daily, whether alone or in society, was "Hannah More." Twenty years after these transactions, when the sisters were settled at Cowslip Green, a gentleman made his appearance at the gate, who, admiring the beauty of the situation and garden, was requested by the eldest sister to walk in and inspect the place. On inquiring to whom it belonged, Mr. Turner (for he it was) was surprised and gratified to hear the name of Hannah More. A friendly conversation immediately ensued, and the long suspended intercourse was revived on the most cordial terms. Mr. Turner occasionally dined at Cowslip Green, and was present at the last festival given by Mrs. More to the school-children on the Mendip. Mrs. More made a point of presenting him a copy of every work she published. Mr. Turner often remarked to his friends that Providence had overruled his wishes to be the husband of Hannah More, and that she was intended for higher things. At his death he bequeathed to her the sum of one thousand pounds; thus testifying to the last the esteem with which he regarded her.

It was, perhaps, necessary to be somewhat circumstantial in detailing the particulars of the above transaction, which has been so grossly misrepresented by some, and so libellously characterized by others. The above narrative may be

implicitly relied on in every particular, as it rests not only on contemporary letters in the hands of the writer, but on the evidence of a lady who was as well the Misses More's pupil at the time as a connexion of Mr. Turner; and who was fully acquainted with all the circumstances. The rectitude and propriety of Hannah's conduct were never questioned at the time. Mrs. Gwatkin, her early, munificent, and judicious friend, approved it entirely; the school continued to sustain its elevated reputation; and Hannah was as much countenanced and beloved by the purest in religion and the strictest in morals as by the most distinguished in scholarship, philosophy, and taste.

CHAPTER II.



They that use this world as not abusing it. 1 *Cor.* vii. 31.



HANNAH'S matrimonial disappointment appears to have determined her in the adoption of single life, though none could have been better adapted than herself to be the solace and ornament of the connubial hearth. She afterwards received two offers, which she declined without hesitation, but with so little offence, that the respective parties always maintained with her the most friendly relations. One of these was the well-known writer, Dr. Langhorne, then vicar of Blagdon, with whom she long maintained a poetical and literary correspondence. The introduction took place in 1773, while she was recovering from an attack of ague, at Uphill, on the Somersetshire coast. The doctor was at the time taking his recreation at the neigh-

bouring and better known watering-place, Weston-super-Mare. They often rode together upon the sands; Miss More, as the custom then was, on the pillion behind her servant; and when it happened that either chanced to miss the other, a paper was placed in a cleft post near the water, generally containing some quaint remark, or a few verses. On one of these occasions, the Doctor committed his wit and gallantry to the sand, on which he inscribed with his cane:

“Along the shore
Walk’d Hannah More;
Waves! let this record last;
Sooner shall ye,
Proud earth and sea,
Than what she writes, be past.
JOHN LANGHORNE.”

Miss More, with her riding-whip, wrote immediately beneath:

“Some firmer basis, polish’d Langhorne, choose,
To write the dictates of thy charming muse;
Thy strains in solid characters rehearse,
And be thy tablet lasting as thy verse.
HANNAH MORE.”

After this, the Misses More, Hannah especially, were frequent guests at Blagdon Vicarage; and Hannah has described with much grace, a Sunday visit to this hospitable and elegant abode, which, as I am not aware that it has ever been published, will be found in the Appendix (IV.)

In the same year, Miss More published "The Search after Happiness," which had suffered so much from careless transcription, that she thought it due to her own reputation to give the world an authorized copy. Not long after, desirous of extending her acquaintance in the polite and literary circles to whom her reputation was now sufficient introduction, she visited London in company with her sisters. The drama was naturally her favourite province of literature; her earliest published production was dramatic; she had even at this time sketched, if not completed, some of her "Sacred Dramas;" and she had already translated some of Metastasio's operas, which her subsequent fastidiousness led her to suppress, with one solitary exception; which will be presently noticed. Accordingly, the theatre, on her arrival in town, was the great point of attraction; and Garrick the great object of curiosity. The character in which she first saw him was Lear; and her description of his powers in a letter to a common friend so clearly evinced the correctness and vigour of her dramatic conceptions, that Garrick immediately sympathized with her taste, and felt curious to see her. In a few days, therefore, after her arrival in town, Miss More was introduced to one who had long been to her imagination a being so isolated in the elevation of his genius as not to be so much as approachable, except by the few minds of kindred order, the Johnsons, the Goldsmiths, and the Reynoldses. Garrick was delighted with his new acquaintance, and took pride and pleasure in in-

roducing her in the splendid circle of genius in which he moved: to the Royal Family, who inquired of him concerning her, he spoke in terms of the most ardent commendation: Mrs. Montagu, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, rapidly succeeded in her acquaintance; and in the course of six weeks (for such was the limit of this visit) she had become intimate with the greatest names in intellect and taste.

Nor did her familiarity with living genius induce neglect of the departed. The correspondence of her sisters at this period contains frequent allusions to the laborious assiduity with which she now cultivated in particular the study of the Roman classics. In one of her letters, Sarah More says: "from her uprising till her down-lying she (Hannah) does nothing but read Latin;" and in another: "the poet is a lazy, idle poet, and does nothing at all but read Virgil and Cicero." But "the poet" was *not* idle in her vocation; she had polished a free imitation of Metastasio's "Attilio Regolo," which she published in 1774 under the title of "The Inflexible Captive." Although not considered by her "sufficiently bustling and dramatic for representation,"¹ public opinion differed. The following year it was acted in Exeter, and afterwards in Bath, with the warmest applause. On the latter occasion Langhorne wrote the prologue, and Garrick the epilogue. The Misses More were all present, and

¹ Advertisement to the play.

Garrick was behind the scenes. Sarah thus speaks of its reception: "All the world of dukes, lords, and barons were there. I sat next a duke and a lord. All expressed the highest approbation of the whole. Never was a piece represented there known to have received so much applause. A shout continued for some minutes after the curtain dropt." It was the wish of Garrick, though not of Hannah, that it should be acted at Covent Garden; but a pique on the part of the principal actress rendered this impracticable.

To return, however, to the year 1774. It is seldom that a contested election proves a favourable court of homage for the claims of literature; yet such was now the renown of Hannah, that in the celebrated election for Bristol in this year, which lasted several weeks, and during which the utmost tumult prevailed, a party of Mr. Cruger's friends suddenly halted beneath the window of the Misses More's house, and were desired by their leader to give "*three cheers to Sappho!*" and "*More Sappho, and Cruger for ever!*"¹ rang to the skies. "It puzzled" (says Miss Sarah More) "many of the gazing multitude, particularly the females, who wanted to know if Sappho was another candidate; but, luckily, our friend the alderman at next door explained the mystery,

¹ It may be right to observe that the Misses More, who on *this* occasion supported the cause of Cruger, were altogether opposed to him in the election of 1780. In the first instance he impugned the policy of the American war; in the second he openly advocated the rebellion, and his mob marched under the thirteen stripes.

and informed them that Sappho was nothing more than a harmless she poet, who formerly made verses, and the whole was a compliment to *you know whom*." On the retirement of Lord Clare from this contest, Edmund Burke was put in nomination, who, during the election, was frequently the guest of the Misses More. The mind of Hannah could scarcely be insensible to the genius of Burke. Her admiration of him was most ardent. When his place on the poll rendered his success unquestionable, the sisters sent him one evening a congratulatory tribute in the form of a cockade, in the composition of which the mind and hand of Hannah were conspicuously present. It was composed of the colours which, in his treatise, he classes under the beautiful and the sublime;¹ and was enwreathed with myrtle, ivy, laurel, and bay, sprinkled with silver, and decorated with silver tassels. On the back was the word BURKE, with the following mottoes:

"He is himself the great sublime he draws."

"In action faithful, and in honour clear."

"Correct with spirit, elegant with ease."

"Justum et tenacem propositi virum."

The servant was ordered to deliver the box containing the cockade, and to disappear. Burke, not suspecting the contents, opened it in a large

¹ These are, for the sublime, "sad and fuscous colours, as black, or brown, or deep purple, or the 'like;'" and for the beautiful, "the milder of every sort; light greens; soft blues; weak whites; pink reds; and violets."—*Burke's Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, ii. 16, and iii. 17.

company, who were highly delighted with the compliment; and he affirmed it could only come from his Park Street friends. The cockade graced his committee-room until the chairing day, when he wore it in triumph. During the procession it was observed that he was unusually hoarse; Hannah presented him with a wreath of flowers, to which was attached the following couplet:

“Great Edmund’s hoarse, they say; the reason’s clear:—
Can Attic lungs respire Bæotian air?”

On the following day, Burke called on the sisters previous to his departure for town, and expressed himself to Hannah on the cockade “in such terms,” says the eldest in a letter to Mrs. Gwatkin, “that never, no never, were compliments dictated in such a charming manner before.” On asking Hannah whether she had any commands to her friend Miss Reynolds (Sir Joshua’s sister,) she said she would trouble him with a letter. The letter reached Miss Reynolds by the hands of her brother, and she opened it in the presence of Dr. Johnson; when it was found to contain a complimentary poetical address to Burke. Chary of his commendations as the doctor was, he did not hesitate immediately to say, “Human language cannot soar higher.”

In the following year (1775,) Miss More again visited the metropolis, and mingled with the same distinguished and intellectual society. Her “Search after Happiness” had reached a fifth edition in the year previous, and a sixth in this. In the beginning of this year an edition was sent from *Phila-*

delphia, with two complimentary poems addressed to the author; and the profits of the sale had netted 100*l.* She thought, therefore, nor without reason, that she had established sufficient literary reputation to justify her in setting a high pecuniary value on her writings. She therefore offered at once to Mr. (afterwards Alderman) Cadell two little poems, to form a thin quarto, after the fashion of the day; requesting to know what he would give for them, and stating at the same time that she would not part with them for “a very paltry consideration.” Mr. Cadell, though he had not seen the poems, was so well prepared to entertain high expectations, that he immediately offered to give Miss More whatever Goldsmith might have received for his “Deserted Village.” This she was unable to discover; and therefore she laid her demand at forty guineas, which the popularity of the volume amply justified. It comprised “Sir Eldred of the Bower,” a tale which appears to have been suggested by the taste for ballad literature, which Percy’s “Relicks of Ancient Poetry” had revived; and “The Legend of the Bleeding Rock” before mentioned. The former of these pieces was honoured by the revision, and even more, by the critical touch of Johnson, whose pen has furnished the stanza which now appears in it:

“My scorn has oft the dart repell’d
Which guileful beauty threw;
But goodness heard, and grace beheld,
Must every heart subdue.”

The religious character of Hannah More is scarcely less conspicuous in this trifle than in the

“Search after Happiness.” The conclusion points a weighty moral :

“The deadliest wounds with which we bleed
Our crimes inflict alone;
Man’s mercies from God’s hand proceed;
His miseries from his own.”

The correspondence which attended the publication of this volume resulted in the intimate friendship which Miss More cultivated with Alderman Cadell (who was a native of Bristol) until his death in 1802; and of which his son was the inheritor.

Of this volume she thus modestly writes to Mrs. Gwatkin: “I own I have my doubts as to its success; but it is weak to nourish apprehensions about such a *bagatelle* as the success of a few trifling verses. I sometimes blame myself even for writing them, and am often tempted to think that I spend too much of that time in measuring of syllables and arranging periods, which ought to be employed to better purposes and more durable ends. Then again I am reconciled to myself by reflecting that I never engage in them but as a substitute for other amusements; that it stands me in the stead of visiting, of balls, and of cards; and that it is cheaper, safer, and, perhaps, as innoxious, as either of the above diversions, especially as I hope so to write that I shall never ‘make one worthy man my foe;’ and I flatter myself that the inoffensiveness of my Muse will in some degree atone for her not being ‘a Muse of fire.’”

Thus, from the first, were Miss More’s relaxations and amusements grave, rational, and elegant;

and tending to the same object with her most serious labours, the diffusion of piety and virtue.

Her acquaintance with Garrick had now ripened into intimacy; and, in her subsequent intercourse with metropolitan society, she was mostly domiciliated in his villa at Hampton, or his house in the Adelphi.

It is much to be regretted that records of Hannah More at this period are so scanty. Many interesting particulars of her converse with the greatest minds of that time are irrecoverably lost, "*carent quia vate sacro.*" It is probable that her sister Martha had preserved not a few choice gleanings; and it is to a letter written by her in this year (1775) that I am indebted for what follows. The sisters were one day dining in the Adelphi, at one of Garrick's small parties, at which was present "a young gentleman of family and fortune, and greatly accomplished," who had been visiting most of the courts of Europe, and was just about to publish his travels in Spain. The rest is in the writer's own words: "Hannah sat mute; only sometimes addressed herself to Mr. Garrick. However, this was not to last for ever. Mrs. G. threatened H. to discover who she was; but she entreated she would be silent. At length the discovery was made by the lady of the house saying in her sweet pretty foreign accent, 'Pray, sir, why don't you address your Spanish to this lady, and see if she pronounces well?' The gentleman stared, and instantly made violent love to her in Italian, little thinking that in that language the lady was his match; but when he made what he

thought these vast discoveries, he turned to Mr. Garrick,—‘ Why, sir, did you not tell me I was in company with a learned lady?’ ‘ With a *learned* lady, sir,’ replies the universal enchanter; ‘ Why, sir, that lady is a great genius! Sir, she has published more than you ever will with all your travelling! She is MY DRAMATIC PUPIL, sir!’ Oh! the poor dear petrified gentleman! You never, madam, saw a man so astonished; as he seems to think printing the *ne plus ultra* of all human perfection. He then paid vast attention to Miss, and was quite struck when he attended to her replies, as you know she can find a pretty answer for most questions.”

The “dramatic pupil” did honour to her tutor. When one of those who

“—— se lectori credere malunt
Quam spectatoris fastidia ferre superbi,”¹

she had involuntarily received a triumphant verdict from the pit; and she now dreaded less the deliberate encounter of that stern tribunal, when duly prepared to meet it.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1777, under the eye and advice of her gifted friend, she planned her tragedy of “Percy,” which she completed at Bristol; and in the November of the same year it was produced on the boards of Covent Garden theatre. Garrick wrote both prologue and epilogue, and sustained the principal character. The success of the play was complete; perhaps at that time unsurpassed. It had a run of twenty-one

¹ Horat. lib. ii. epist. i. 214.

nights, and soon became universally acted at the provincial theatres. Nor was its popularity confined to England. It was translated into French by M. de Calonne, prime minister of France; and, in a German dress, "Percy" appeared on the stage of Vienna. Miss More received on the occasion the most flattering honours and distinctions, the whole blood of the Percies did homage to their minstrel. The Duke of Northumberland, Earl Percy, and the editor of the "Relics," all came forward, complimented, and thanked her. An edition of nearly four thousand copies of the play was sold in a fortnight, and the authoress realized on the whole nearly 600*l*.

The plot of this tragedy, founded on the story of Raoul de Coucy, (which has some points of affinity with that of Tancred and Sigismunda,) is sufficiently dramatic.

The palpable anachronism which puts the Crusades after Chevy Chase, is thus excused in a letter to Garrick; "I have supposed it to happen some time after the battle of Chevy Chase: no offence to history if I have been guilty of a few anachronisms; for, luckily for me, I believe the whole story of Chevy Chase to be purely legendary, as I cannot find the date, or even the event, in any history. If you please to look into the first volume of Percy's Relics, page 253, you will see on what I have founded the quarrel between Earl Raby and Percy."¹

¹ I can find nothing in the first volume of Percy's Relics which at all bears upon the subject, although there is much which relates to the feud between the families of Percy and Douglas.

The moral of the play (that revenge recoils upon the avenger) is concentrated in Raby's speech, with which it concludes:

“—— With impious pride I snatch'd
The bolt of vengeance from the hand of heaven.
My soul submissive bows. A righteous God
Has made my crime become my chastisement;
And pull'd those miseries on my guilty head,
I would have drawn on others. O! 'tis just!
'Tis righteous retribution! I submit!”

“Percy,” therefore, like all the productions of the same pen, is not deficient in valuable moral; and it may be remarked that both the moral and much of the business of the play are the same that form the interest of the grandest tragedy of modern times, (if we may so designate an undramatic production,) “The Bride of Lammermoor.” The scene in the second act, where Elwina discloses to Percy her marriage with Douglas, is parallel to the entrance of the Master of Ravenswood, when Lucy Ashton is signing the fatal document. Percy is, however, a very different, though not less noble character; while Ravenswood instantly destroys the pledge of his plighted affections, Percy will by no entreaty be prevailed on to part with the scarf.

That “Percy” has not for many years been revived, is nothing extraordinary. The improvements and declensions of public taste alike conspire to exclude it from the stage. It is astonishing that Garrick, with his devoted admiration of Shakspeare, should yet have been the great patron of a school systematically opposed to the greatest of dramatists, and even of poets. The frigid uni-

ties, the stiff proprieties, which the critic thought he found in his Aristotle, but which, in truth, receded widely from the theory of the Stagirite, and still more widely from the practice of the Attic stage, were, in Miss More's dramatic days, the common law of the British theatre, and the non-observance of them was theatrical outlawry. The maiden chastity of the Greek Muse, sublimed into apathy by the critics and dramatists of the age of Lewis XIV., became the coldness of a corpse at the touch of Voltaire. Yet from this deadly enemy of Shakspeare, of whose beauties he had as much conception as of those of religion or truth, did the English stage condescend to receive her edition of Aristotle. Shakspeare, it is true, kept his ground unmoved; but his great contemporaries were rarely tolerated; and wo to the *modern* who broke the canons of Ferney! This slavish principle is now obsolete; and the plays which were composed during its influence, however little affected by it, have become unpopular in the closet; while on the stage, alas! neither Shakspeare nor even Voltaire is permitted to rule, and Johnson conjectured but too truly.¹

¹ But who the coming changes can presage,
 And mark the future periods of the stage?
 Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,
 New Behns, new Dufseys, yet remain in store:
 Perhaps where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet died,
 On flying cars new sorcerers may ride.
 Perhaps (for who can guess the effects of chance?)
 Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.

Prologue at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre.

While occupied with the composition of "Percy," Miss More was also engaged on a book of a very different kind; the first of her ethical treatises; which appeared in the same year, under the title of "Essays on various subjects, principally designed for Young Ladies." This work the authoress afterwards suppressed; not, apparently, from any change of opinion, but because she had incorporated the substance of it with her other writings, and treated the topics it discussed more elaborately and diffusely. Accordingly, it does not appear in the edition of her works published in 1830. It is, however, a valuable little manual of good sense, taste and piety, and may be read with advantage by all ages and both sexes. The chapter "On the Importance of Religion" is illustrative of the ruling principle by which Hannah More was guided at all periods of life; and the concluding paragraph may be taken as the inverse measure of her conduct in the rich spring-tide of her life and morning splendour of her fame. "To put off religion till we have lost all taste for amusement,—to refuse listening to the voice of the charmer till our enfeebled organs can no longer listen to the voice of 'singing men and singing women,' and not to devote one day to heaven till we have 'no pleasure in them' ourselves, is but an ungracious offering. And it is a wretched sacrifice to the God of heaven to present him with the remnants of decayed appetites, and the leavings of extinguished passions."

Miss More's sojourn with the Garricks was

productive of the closest friendship between her and those excellent persons. Her taste and genius bore so near a resemblance to those of her distinguished host, that they mutually found pleasure in each other's society; and Mrs. Garrick, charmed with the amiable and devout character of Hannah, and loving every object of her husband's regard, treated her with the tenderest affection. The strong religious principle of Hannah made her a comfort and a counsellor to her friends; and Mrs. Garrick, although a Romanist, used to say that Miss More was her domestic chaplain. Hannah was not one on whom kindness of any sort could be lost; and her gratitude and love to her friends at Hampton seemed almost to overpower expression. In the endeavour to give utterance to what she felt, she had written a trifle called "An Ode from H. M., at Bristol, to Mr. Garrick's house-dog Dragon, at Hampton." Such was the avidity with which every production of her pen was sought, that manuscript copies of this little piece rapidly multiplied; and at length she was so much urged to print it, that, in 1778, it made its appearance before the world. A thousand copies were sold in the first week. It beautifully expresses her affection for the Garricks. She imagines herself to take Dragon's place, and enlarges on the care and solicitude she would, in his charge, exhibit for her friends. Garrick was at this period performing each of his characters for the last time, with a view to retirement from the stage. To this circumstance a great part of

the ode alludes. The last stanza, as usual in Mrs. More's compositions, contains a moral application. Rarely shall we find a passage of nobler or simpler grandeur than that which concludes this little poem:

“How wise! a short retreat to steal;
The vanity of life to feel,
And from its cares to fly;
To act one calm domestic scene,
Earth's bustle and the grave between;
Retire and learn to die.”

At the same time with this were published the “Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne, aged three years,” the daughter of Bishop Horne; and a little tale called the “The Puppet Show,” containing a lesson which the writings of Hannah More so abundantly teach,—the essential importance of good nature, good sense, and piety, as requisites in a wife.

Having been so eminently successful with “Percy,” Miss More, under the superintendence of Garrick, composed another tragedy, which she originally called “The Bridal Day,” a title afterwards exchanged for that of “The Fatal Falsehood.” The plot is well contrived, and affords good scope for dramatic action. The moral of the play is told by the authoress in the prologue, which she wrote herself:

“*Self-conquest* is the lesson books should preach;
Self-conquest is the theme the stage should teach;
Vouchsafe to learn this obvious duty here;
The verse though feeble, yet the moral's clear.”

In a letter to Mrs. Gwatkin, Miss Sarah More writes, "Mr. Gwatkin told me that he had mentioned to you the success of 'Fatal Falsehood.' On the night of its appearance it was indeed *greatly* received: never any thing went off with more applause. When the curtain dropped, the house absolutely shouted." The manager, however, stopped the run of the play after the fourth night, on account of the advanced state of the season, (May,) and, as Miss Sarah More expresses it, "of fifty *et ceteras*." "The play" (she adds) "is universally admired, and has added greatly to the reputation of the author. Even Franklin, Colman,¹ and the whole envious tribe, openly avow their approbation of the piece." The Bristol manager borrowed the play of Mr. Harris, and produced it at Bristol and at Bath with great effect.

It was on the production of this drama that Miss More first experienced a truth with which she became afterwards familiar:

"Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue."

The play was scurrilously attacked by several periodical writers, but in particular by Mrs. Cowley the actress, who, in the *St. James's Chronicle*, accused the authoress of having plagiarized from a *prose* tragedy of her own, entitled "*Albina*." Miss More's first feeling on this shameful charge was deep indignation, and she purposed prose-

¹ It is but justice to Colman's memory to say that Miss Sarah More allows in another letter that his approbation was conveyed "in a very handsome manner."

cuting the libeller. But as her object was nothing more than self-vindication, she very justly thought that a solemn disclaimer in the paper which had first given currency to the assertion, and in some other prints, would be more efficient for that purpose. This therefore she adopted, denying in the most express language her knowledge that such a play as "Albina" existed. In writing to Mr. Cadell for his advice on this subject, she says characteristically, "I hope I have not said a word that looks like a wish to injure Mrs. Cowley, or that carries any thing like revenge or womanish pride. I want not to hurt *her*, but to clear *myself*. I am contented *she* should be the first genius, so that *I* am not the greatest thief." On Mrs. Cowley reiterating her assertion, Miss More purposed to defend herself by affidavit; her friends, however, dissuaded her from a step so unnecessary to her cause, and the calumniator and the calumny sunk into contempt. A letter, preserved among the papers of the late Mr. Cadell, is evidence that Miss More had not then to learn the commandment of overcoming evil with good, which she had so many occasions to practise, and which on all she so faithfully fulfilled. In the present instance, too, there was not the shadow of ostentation or sinister motive. The act was truly "in secret;" and, but for the preservation of the letter alluded to, must have remained such till "He who seeth in secret shall reward it openly." "I have long since," writes she to Mr. Cadell, "forgiven Mrs. Cowley most heartily."

* * * “I return you many thanks for your wise and friendly advice. Believe me, let them say and do what they please, not a word shall ever escape my pen. I never should have noticed her but at the injunction of my friends.” * * *

“I am grieved that her malice springs from her poverty. Perhaps, had she been at ease, she had not been wicked. A friend writes me word that Mr. Colman intends giving her the chance of another benefit. Should that happen, I should be very glad you would get somebody to take a ticket; and *if you will be so good as send a guinea for it, as from yourself, I'll thankfully repay it you.* If she has no benefit, perhaps you would contrive to *give the guinea as from a friend of yours, for a copy of her play,¹ to her bookseller.* I would not for the world she should suspect whence it came, as all pity from me must look like insult, *which, God knows, is far from my heart.*” Such were, from first to last, Hannah’s replies to malice and defamation.

“The Fatal Falsehood” never attained the popularity of “Percy.” It was produced at an unfavourable season of the year. During part of the time of preparation, Miss More was confined to her bed by rheumatic gout. She even composed the prologue when she had no use of her limbs, and had two perpetual blisters on each side her head. But one melancholy circumstance, above

¹ The preface to this play was full of calumnious charges against Hannah More.

all, contributed to this comparative failure. Ere "The Fatal Falsehood" was completed, the friend under whose judgment and direction it had grown, —beneath whose influential patronage it was to have been produced,—and whose powers had so greatly contributed to the success of "Percy,"—had acted out the "calm domestic scene" which he had retired to enjoy. In January, 1779, Garrick took his farewell of the stage of life. To the effect of this event on Hannah More we shall presently return. Her tenderest and kindest attentions were now lavished on the consolation of the widow. Mrs. Garrick had not been inattentive to those resources which alone could furnish solace and support in that hour of utmost need. Devoted with all woman's intensity of love to her gifted partner, she had yet learned to love him in subserviency to the good Giver of this and every other blessing she had enjoyed.¹ In the cul-

¹ In an extract of a letter from Miss More to her sister Sarah, preserved in another from the latter to Mrs. Gwatkin, we have the following interesting particulars of the first interview between Miss More and Mrs. Garrick after their loss:—"I got to Mr. Rackett's, where Mrs. Garrick was every moment expected, as the undertakers were preparing to hang her house with black. She was prepared for meeting me. She ran into my arms, where we both remained silent for ten minutes. At last she whispered me, 'I have this moment embraced his coffin! and you come next.' She soon recovered herself, and said with great composure, 'The goodness of God to me is inexpressible. I desired to die; but it is His will I should live, and I will obey it. He has convinced me He will not let my life be quite miserable, for He gives astonishing strength to my body, and grace to my heart: neither I deserve, but I am thankful for both,' I never saw such respectable sorrow, nor more perfect submis-

tivation of that deep spirit of submission which might enable her to endure with patience and profit, the severest trial which earth could have in store for her, she was doubtless materially assisted by her pious guest; and to the same kind aid, under a fatherly Chastener, she was indebted for continued support, now that her hour was come. Hannah, in the strict seclusion of Hampton, found her best satisfaction in furnishing the aid which none other was so capable of affording to her bereaved friend, of whom for the next five years she was almost the constant companion, and whose friendship, until the death of Mrs. Garrick in 1822, at the age of ninety-nine, she assiduously and unremittingly cultivated.¹

sion.” In a letter from Martha More to Mrs. Gwatkin (date uncertain) we have the following :—“We had a letter yesterday from Hampton. Never did I hear of such a woman! such dignity in her grief! such calmness! such piety! it is astonishing. She was at a friend’s house during the time of his lying in state. On their return to the Adelphi my sister writes thus :—‘On Wednesday night we came to this house; she bore it with great tranquillity; but what was my surprise to see her go alone into the chamber and bed in which *he* had died that day fortnight! She had a delight in it beyond expression. I asked the next day how she went through it. She told me, very well; that she first prayed with great composure, then went and kissed the dear bed, and got into it with more pleasure than any she had lain in since his death.’”

¹ The charge of neglect towards Mrs. Garrick, which has been made against Hannah More, is wholly unfounded. The duties which the latter had imposed on herself, withdrew her in her later years from London society; and Mrs. Garrick was little disposed to retire so far from town as her friend resided. Thus, their personal intercourse was, indeed, suspended, but with no suspension of their friendship or even their correspondence.

CHAPTER III.

“I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” *Matt. v. 44, 45.*

AFTER the death of Garrick, Miss More never was present at any theatrical entertainment. Even the performance of her own last tragedy could not tempt her to risk the revival of associations which so painfully increased the intensity of abiding regrets. And when, some years after, Mrs. Siddons, whom she had never seen, represented the heroine of “Percy,” the authoress could not be prevailed

on to witness the exhibition. Her account of the affair, as detailed by herself to Miss Ann Gwatkin, was as follows: "Now was the time I felt I ought to exert myself, as it is always better to commence with a great rather than with a small effort. I was strongly urged to go to the theatre, but did not go. With that day my trial was not ended, as on the following I met a large party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and by many I was asked with earnestness, 'How do you like *her*?' 'Like *whom*?' 'Why, Mrs. Siddons; of course you went to see her!' My answer in the negative astonished them. 'How could you be so wanting in curiosity?' It was then requisite to maintain my ground, and I replied, 'It was not a want of curiosity, but to have gone would have been inconsistent with my publicly professed opinions.'" ¹ At the same time she abandoned writing for the stage. To gratify, however, her dramatic taste, she proceeded to complete a work which she had begun in very early years, and which is one of her most popular productions. This was the "Sacred Dramas," which were published in 1782. They were written principally for young persons,

¹ Mrs. Siddons afterwards enjoyed the intimacy of Hannah More, who had not, however, the full opportunity of comprehending her powers. Mrs. Siddons on one occasion recited to her the play of Hamlet, but Miss More had heard the same play recited by Garrick, and did not therefore so much enjoy the recitation as she might have done had another play been selected. The subject of her anti-dramatic opinions will be discussed at a more convenient period of the narrative.

and are admirable in this view. The attempt was bold, as Johnson, whose decisions were then received as the last appeal in polite literature, had just delivered his oracle on the subject very explicitly.¹ Fortified, however, not only by the precedent of Cowley's "Davideis," but by the still more impregnable authority of the bard of Paradise, in taking Scripture as a groundwork of poetry; with the examples before her of "Samson Agonistes" and "Athalie," not to refer to the more ancient and solemn compositions of Apollinarius, Hannah More ventured to controvert the supremacy of Johnsonian authority, and obtained, even from the public of 1782, a triumphant verdict. She has, however, so far done homage to the critical "colossus," or rather, perhaps, to piety and just taste, that she has allowed herself small latitude in the conduct of these dramas. They adhere closely to the Scripture narrative, which they very naturally and agreeably cast into the dramatic form. Very shortly after their publication they were translated into German.

¹ "Sacred History has always been read with submission, reverence, and an imagination overawed and controlled. We have been accustomed to acquiesce in the nakedness and simplicity of the authentic narratives, and to repose on its veracity with such humble confidence as represses curiosity. We go with the historian as he goes, and stop with him when he stops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already sufficient for the purposes of religion, seems not only useless, but in some degree profane."—*Johnson's Life of Cowley, speaking of the "Davideis."*

The friends who principally shared with Mrs. Garrick Miss More's society, were Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Boscawen, ladies of equal literary *pretension*, though far from equal in literary acquirement; but both entertaining the most affectionate esteem for their common friend. To the latter Miss More dedicated her poem on Sensibility, which was published together with the Sacred Dramas. Sensibility was at that time *the fashion*; but by this expression was not to be understood an acute susceptibility of human suffering, much less a self-denying effort to relieve it. The sentiment was perfectly compatible with the most heartless disregard of real afflictions, and the most selfish prosecution of personal objects.¹ It was claimed by the town belle, who defrauded the revenue, and starved the native manufacturer; and by the man of pleasure, who triumphed in the ruin and guilt which he was scattering around him. To weep by the couch of Le Fevre, or sympathize with the sorrows of Maria, was title enough to "Sensibility." Miss More, in her elegant and animated poem, indignantly vindicates the real sentiment, and exposes the counterfeit; and to no pen more than hers does the present age owe the diminution which has unquestionably taken place in morbid and hypocritical sensibility. The lines which begin with "Since trifles make

¹ What was intended by the term "sensibility" in fashionable life is admirably depicted by Mrs. More in "Cœlebs," under the character of Lady Melbury, who has the most refined compassion for "interesting persons," but ruins families by unpaid debts.

the sum of human things," and conclude with "Corrode our comfort, and destroy our ease," are in truth "golden verses," inspired by the truest sensibility, and inspiring it in turn; worthy to be committed to every memory, and engraven on every heart.¹

Shortly after the publication of this poem, Miss More visited Oxford, where scholarship and gallantry united to pay every suitable compliment to "Sappho." In the common room of Pembroke College she found a print of Johnson, under which was inscribed the verse from her "Sensibility;"

"And is not JOHNSON ours? himself a host."

She was at this time on a visit to her friend Mrs. Kennicott, wife of the celebrated critical editor of the Old Testament. Among the gallant compliments which the wits of Oxford paid on the occasion, the following may be noticed for its brevity:

"Muses nine we had before;
But *Kennicott* has shown us—*More*."

In the same year was published a little piece, entitled "Reflections of King Hezekiah in his

¹ In this poem occurs the line,

"Thee, mitred Chester! all the nine shall boast."

The allusion is to Bishop Porteus's poem on Death. On this occasion the bishop wrote the following epigram:

"How potent is thy Muse, O More!

Whose vivifying breath

Can do what Muse ne'er did before,—

Give *life* and fame to—*death*!"

Sickness." It is a free paraphrase of the poem in Isaiah, xxxviii.; and the subject was suggested by a sermon preached by Sir James Stonhouse. The publication took place at the especial request of Bishop Lowth, although many were desirous of seeing it in print.

It was about the same time (1781,) that the sympathies of Miss More were engaged in favour of a most interesting object, whether regarded personally, or with reference to the mystery which involves the story of her life. A pupil and intimate friend of Miss More, to whom I am indebted for the communication, being on a visit at Belmont, was one day surprised, on riding through the village of Flax Bourton, at the appearance of a remarkably delicate hand and arm gathering blackberries from a hedge beside a haystack, and emerging from a sleeve by no means of the finest texture. On turning round, the fair owner discovered a beauty of countenance, a delicacy of person, a taste in her mean but singular apparel, and a gracefulness of carriage, which at once convinced the spectatress she was no common peasant girl. Her countenance, apart from its loveliness, had an expression which in any face would have arrested attention. Her clothing was entirely woollen, and in the tucks of her dress she carried articles of earthenware. She was unemployed in any rural labour; she was neither travelling nor begging; but seemed to be wildly perambulating the small enclosure round the haystack. The lady addressed her, offered her money, (which she then

accepted,) and desired to see her the next morning at Belmont. She kept the appointment, and requested some milk, but arranged the money in a fanciful form at the side of the road; nor could she then be prevailed on to receive any money whatever. Being asked where she dwelt, she replied, "Under the haystack."

It was obvious that the unfortunate girl was insane; her patroness immediately inquired into her history, and found that she had been first discovered under the haystack some time previous; and that the ladies of the neighbourhood, finding it impossible to persuade her to enter a house, had, on that occasion, placed her in confinement in St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol. She had, however, shortly after, obtained her release, and returned six miles to her beloved haystack at Flax Bourton, where she had remained ever since, fed and protected by the compassion of the neighbours. A benevolent lady had offered her the shelter of a roof; but she had replied, with great pertinacity, "Trouble and misery dwell in houses, and there is no happiness but in liberty and fresh air." On this, some ladies of the neighbourhood subscribed and bought the haystack. She would receive no money or trinkets, but placed the money at the doors of houses, and suspended the trinkets on the trees. To this practice she made an exception in favour of bracelets and miniatures. She had sometimes desired to have a Queen Ann's half-crown sewed on a black riband, and would wear

it on her arm, kissing it with great delight, and saying it much resembled mamma.

The poor sufferer's new patroness immediately forwarded a statement of her case to the Misses More. With their customary activity and philanthropy, they immediately exerted themselves in behalf of the unhappy creature, and had her removed to Mr. Henderson's lunatic asylum at Hanham. A subscription was immediately instituted, to which Hannah herself largely contributed, and the application of which she directed. Poor Louisa (for by that name the maniac was commonly known) continued to experience the kindness of her benefactress until the 19th of December, 1800, when she died in Guy's hospital, whither she had been removed as an incurable.

It is certain that Louisa was a person accustomed to the usages of refined society, and, apparently, a German. She was, however, studiously reserved on the subject of her connexions. On the morning when she first visited Belmont, Mr. Turner, inferring from her accent that she was a foreigner, addressed her in several continental languages; at last, on making his communication in German, she, although at that time in the highest spirits, immediately burst into a passionate flood of tears. The wife of a Danish captain of a vessel, resident in Bristol, visited her under the haystack, and conversed with her in German; when Louisa told her that she had been confined by her father in a convent at Sleswig,

because she would not marry the person of his choice, and had thence escaped with her lover. The Danish lady was afterwards reduced to be an upper servant in the house where Louisa was confined; but no farther disclosures were made, although the unhappy maniac would not unfrequently ask in German for any thing she wanted.

Notwithstanding Louisa's caution, she was occasionally thrown off her guard. On one occasion, when the servants of the asylum ran to the window, she asked the cause; and on being told it was a carriage and four horses, exclaimed, "A wonderful sight, truly! my father's carriage was always drawn by eight." When two gentlemen visited her at Mr. Henderson's, after some conversation, they said; "Shall we, Louisa, drive to Bohemia?" She instantly replied, "That is papa's own country." During her sojourn at Mr. Henderson's a young man in a travelling carriage called at the house, and desired to see Louisa. The servants said he had landed from abroad, and had travelled post a night and a day. His manner and importunity prevailed with Mr. H. to grant the request, which at first he was unwilling to do. On seeing him, the poor maniac uttered a piercing scream; while the visiter, shocked at the spectacle, hid his face with both hands, and exclaiming, with an expression of horror, "It is herself!" sprang into his carriage, and hastened away with the utmost precipitation. Nor could Louisa be persuaded to look up until she was assured he had departed.

Miss More had scarcely become acquainted with

Louisa, before she published the few particulars she could glean respecting her in the *St. James's Chronicle*, under the title of "A Tale of real Wo." This account was forthwith translated into German, and circulated at Vienna; it was also printed in France; and thus the public attention, as well abroad as in England, was directed to the subject.

In the year 1785, a French tract was published on the continent, but without any mention of author, publisher, or place of publication, although supposed to be printed in some part of the imperial dominions. It was entitled "*L'Inconnue: Histoire Veritable*;" and, if it be really what it professes, it scarcely leaves a doubt that the unfortunate lady of the haystack was none other than *Mdle. La Frëulen*, the supposed illegitimate daughter of the Emperor Francis I. It would neither suit the limits nor the subject of these pages to enter at any length into that story; but the notice of Louisa would, perhaps, be incomplete without some allusion to it. When Joseph II. was on his travels in Italy, the King of Spain received a letter purporting to come from the Emperor, and imploring his protection for an illegitimate half-sister, till somewhat should be done towards her settlement in life. The king, suspecting some forgery, sent the letter to Joseph at Milan, who had neither written it, nor heard of the person; and he accordingly transmitted it to the Empress Maria Teresa; who immediately set on foot an inquiry, and arrested *Mdle. La Frëulen*, at Bourdeaux. She was thence conducted to the Count

von Cobenzel, Imperial Minister at Brussels, to whom she detailed such a tissue of prevarications and falsehoods, as renders it difficult to know whether any part of her story is to be credited. There were, however, some points of her narrative in which she was consistent, and these certainly find a counterpart in the story of Louisa. She said that she had been told that the place where she was educated was called Bohemia: that she had been visited in her childhood by persons whom she understood to be her father and mother; that, after the death of the Emperor, she was conducted by an ecclesiastic to Hamburg, whence she was to embark for Bordeaux, to be placed in a convent. That her horror of a convent made her leave her guide at Hamburg, and walk on with no settled purpose till night overtook her, and she lay down in a barn to sleep. Hence she advanced towards Sweden in a miserable carriage, from which she fell, and received so dangerous a wound in her head that she was conveyed to a neighbouring inn, and placed under the care of a surgeon.¹ At Stockholm, she was discovered by the Count di Belgioioso, the Imperial Ambassador, who found her a lodging, and treated her with great respect. It was here that she saw a picture, as she said, of the gentleman who often visited her in Bohemia, and whom she supposed to be her father. This

¹ Miss More examined the head of Louisa, to ascertain whether there were any appearances to connect her with this adventure, and found scars on the crown of the head and behind the ear.

was a portrait of the Emperor Francis. The shock was so severe that a violent fever ensued. This anecdote was confirmed by the Count di Belgioioso at the time. After her recovery, the Count acquainted her that she was charged with having eloped from Hamburg in company with a young Englishman. This charge she at first pertinaciously denied to the Count; but afterwards she admitted it, though she denied it again to the Count von Cobenzel. Dismissed from Stockholm as an impostor, she made her way back to Hamburg, and thence sailed to Bordeaux. Here she involved herself in debt, and procured the forgery of various letters; among others, that which led to her apprehension. It is quite evident that she had no regard to truth, whether from moral depravity, or from a strange defect in education, in which her moral instruction was altogether neglected. Certain it is that she could neither read nor write. Nor is it less certain that Louisa appeared to be similarly ignorant. When offered books, she replied, "No; reading is study, and study makes me mad." Though books were left in the room with her, and she was closely watched, she was never observed to look into one. This was the more extraordinary, as she was evidently of a grade in life in which such an humble accomplishment as reading is universal. The result of La Frëulen's examination was that she was conducted to Quievraing, a small town between Mons and Valenciennes, where she was presented with fifty louis d'or, and there abandoned. This was

in the year 1769. Nothing more is known of her history, unless she was the Louisa who was first discovered in England in 1776.

While employed on the benevolent work of sheltering and protecting Louisa, another candidate for Miss More's liberality appeared. On her return to Bristol from Mrs. Montagu's villa at Sandleford, some verses were shown her, neither inexpressive nor inharmonious, purporting to be the work of a poor illiterate woman, who supplied the family with milk. Genius and distress were sufficient introductions to Hannah More, who immediately inquired into the woman's history and circumstances. Her name was Ann Yearsley, and she was about eight-and-twenty years of age. She had never received the slightest education, except writing, which she learned from her brother. Her stock of poetical reading was the "Paradise Lost," the "Night Thoughts," Pope's "Eloïsa," a few of Shakspeare's plays, and a translation of the "Georgics," of which last she always spoke with great enthusiasm, and from which she probably borrowed much of the mythological allusion which somewhat ambitiously characterizes her poetry.¹ She was, however, well read in the Scriptures, the simplicity, sublimity, and comprehensiveness of which expanded her mind, and imparted their rhythm and elevation to her verses. She had married young; and repeated losses and

¹ Some of her classical embellishments she allowed she had taken from "little ordinary prints which hung in a shop window."

a numerous family had reduced her husband and herself, in the severe winter of 1783-4, to extreme distress. Her mother, her six children, and herself, who was on the eve of confinement, were perishing of starvation, at the moment when a benevolent inhabitant of Clifton discovered and supported them. The mother was in so weak a state that she died in the ecstasy of joy and surprise.

When Miss More had satisfied herself of the truth of Ann Yearsley's narrative, and the genuineness of her poetry, she immediately addressed Mrs. Montagu on the subject, requesting her aid in raising a subscription to enable her to publish the poems for the author's benefit. In her letter she says: "It is not intended to place her in such a state of independence as might seduce her to devote her time to the idleness of poetry. I hope she is convinced that the making of verses is not the great business of human life, and that, as a wife and a mother, she has duties to fill, the smallest of which is of more value than the finest verses she can write." The consequence of this appeal was upwards of one thousand subscribers to the first edition of the poems; and, at length, considerably more than 500*l.* was collected for the authoress. The money so raised was placed, by Mrs. Y's. own consent, in the hands of trustees, and invested in the public funds, for the use of herself and family. The sequel of the story is melancholy; and it is well for human nature that the name of Ann Yearsley can only be per-

petuated in conjunction with that of Hannah More. With her husband, she accepted an invitation from Miss More to supper, when her kind patroness informed her how the money was disposed. Immediately after supper, Mrs. Yearsley did not hesitate to accuse Miss More of envy and embezzlement. Astonished at this language, Hannah wished her good night, and told her that she would talk over the matter the next morning. In the presence of a gentleman of Bristol, the conversation was on the next day renewed; when the ungrateful woman did not hesitate to repeat her accusations of jealousy and fraud. Reason being now evidently useless, Miss More gave way. Ten guineas remained uninvested; Miss More presented her with these. The wretch immediately flung them at the head of her benefactress,¹ whose meek and Christian reply must not here pass unrecorded: "May we never meet again till we meet in heaven!"

In forwarding to Mr. Alderman Cadell, who had invested the money, the receipts for the dividends, Miss More writes in a like strain of tranquil benevolence. "I shall promote this worthless woman's interests *with the same zeal*, but not the same pleasure. She defeats *my wish of keeping her baseness a secret* by telling it herself to every body.

¹ This Mrs. Yearsley positively denied in the preface to a subsequent edition of her poems. The fact, however, with Hannah More's reply, rests upon the testimony of some of Mrs. More's earliest friends.

Be so good as hurry the new edition, and order two hundred down here to Mills as fast as possible, as there is really a just complaint against me for not having furnished the subscription."

No person whose opinion is of the smallest importance has ever ventured on any occasion to accuse Hannah More of the slightest malversation in this affair. It is, however, not a little surprising that any should be found to palliate the gross ingratitude of Mrs. Yearsley, who, not content with such outrages of decency and morality as that which has been mentioned, afterwards published her poems, accompanied with a preface bitterly reflecting on her patroness. She afterwards produced a tragedy, entitled "Earl Goodwin," which was acted on the Bath and Bristol boards. But though her productions, when her disadvantages are considered, were extraordinary, they seldom rose above that condition which the great master of the art declares to be forbidden to poetry.¹ Accordingly, her play had little success. The history of the miserable creature is a striking comment on the Scripture declaration, "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house."² With the money which her waywardness had wrested from its prudent and legitimate guardians, she established a circulating library at the Hot Wells. But her in-

¹ "—— mediocribus esse poëtis,

Non homines, non d, nōn concessere columnæ."

Horat. Art. Poet. 372.

² Prov. xvii. 13.

gratitude was notorious, and she was shunned and discountenanced by all. She now began to find that even her poetical character was only relative, and that the public estimate of her genius fell short of her own. Her two sons perished in the flower of their youth—one in battle, the other by disease; and, outcast, desolate, and broken-hearted, she retired to her native town of Melksham in Wilts, where, in 1806, she died insane and destitute.

As the poems of Ann Yearsley, or *Lactilla*, as was her *Parnassian* designation, are become scarce, and are unquestionably a curiosity, the reader may perhaps not deem it impertinent if this chapter is concluded by an extract from one of them, illustrative of a former narrative.

“Beneath this stack Louisa’s dwelling rose;
 Here the fair maniac bore three winters’ snows;
 Here long she shiver’d, stiffening in the blast!
 The lightnings round their livid horrors cast;
 The thunders roar, while rushing torrents pour,
 And add new woes to bleak affliction’s hour!
 The heavens lour dismal, while the storm descends:
 No mother’s bosom the soft maid befriends;
 But fright’ned o’er the wilds she swiftly flies,
 And, drenched with rains, the roofless haystack tries.
 The morn was fair, and gentle — I sought
 These lonely woodlands, friends to sober thought.
 With solitude the slow-pac’d maid is seen
 Tread the dark grove and unfrequented green.
 Well — I knew their lurkings: Phœbus shone,—
 While, musing, she pursued the track alone.

¹ Hannah; or Stella, as Miss More was then poetically styled by Mrs. Y.

O thou kind friend! whom here I dare not name,
Who to Louisa's shed of misery came;
Lured by the tale, sighed o'er her beauteous form,
And gently drew her from the beating storm;—
Stand forth—defend, for well thou canst; the cause
Of Heaven, and justify its rigid laws.
Yet own that human laws are harshly giv'n,
When they extend beyond the will of Heav'n.
Say can thy pen for that hard duty plead,
By which the meek and helpless maid's decreed
To dire seclusion,—snatch'd from guiltless joys,
To where corroding grief the frame destroys?
Monastic glooms, which active virtue cramp,
Where horrid silence chills the vital lamp?
Slowly and faint the languid pulses beat,
And the chill'd heart forgets its genial heat;
The dim sunk eye with hopeless glance explores
The solemn aisles and death-denouncing doors,
Ne'er to be pass'd again;—now heaves the sigh,
Now unavailing sorrows fill the eye.
Fancy once more brings back the long-lost youth
To the fond soul, in all the charms of truth:
She welcomes the lov'd image. Busy thought
Portrays the past with guiltless pleasures fraught;—
'Tis momentary bliss, 'tis rapture high,—
The heart o'erflows, and all is ecstasy!
Memory, I charge thee, yet preserve the shade:
Ah, let not yet the glittering colours fade!
Forbear the cruel future yet to view,
When the sad soul must bid a long adieu
E'en to its fancied bliss.—Ah! turn not yet,
Thou wretched bankrupt! that must soon forget
This farewell draught of joy! Lo! fancy dies!
E'en the thin phantom of past pleasure flies!
Thought sinks in real wo; too poor to give
Her present bliss, she bids the future live:
The spirit soon quits that fond clasp; for, see!
The future offers finished misery:
Hope quite extinct,—lo! frantic through the aisle
She raves, while superstition grimly smiles;

The exhausted mourner mopes, then wildly stalks
Round the drear dome, and seeks the darkest walks;
The glance distracted each sad sister meets;
The sorrow-speaking eye in silence greets
Each death-devoted maid. Louisa here
Runs through each various shape of sad despair;
Now swells with gusts of hope, now, sickening, dies;
Alternate thoughts of death and life arise
Within her panting soul; the firm resolve,
The new desire, in stronger fears dissolve;
She starts; then, seized the moment of her fate,
Quits the lone cloister, and the horrid grate;
Whilst wilder horrors to receive her wait.
Muffled on freedom's happy plains they stand,
And eager seize her not reluctant hand.
Too late to these mild shores the mourner came;
For now the guilt of fright o'erwhelms her frame;
Her broken vows in wild disorder roll,
And stick like serpents in her trembling soul.
Thought! what art thou? of these she boasts no more;
O'erwhelm'd thou diest amid the wilder roar
Of lawless anarchy, which sweeps the soul;
Whilst her drown'd faculties, like pebbles, roll,
Unloos'd, uptorn, by whirlwinds of despair;
Each well-taught moral now dissolves in air;
Disshvelled even her beauteous tresses fly,
And the wild glance now fills the starting eye;
The balls fierce glaring in their orbits move;
(Bright spheres, where beamed the sparkling fires of love,)
Now roam for objects which once filled her mind;
Ah! long-lost objects they must never find!
Ill-starr'd Louisa! Memory! 'tis a strain
Which fills my soul with sympathetic pain;
Remembrance, hence! give thy vain struggles o'er,
Nor swell the line with forms that live no more."

CHAPTER IV.

I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. *John*, ix. 4.

THE beloved Evangelist, in recording the miracle wherein the Saviour first “manifested forth” that “glory” which abode in him, adds, with a simplicity which no *Christian* can well misinterpret, “and his disciples *believed* in him.” That they “believed in him” before, in the *ordinary* sense of the word, is sufficiently implied in the fact that they were his disciples: they had, indeed, acknowledged him in terms to be “the Christ,” “Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write,” “the Son of God,” “the King of Israel.”¹ But there was yet a higher and more intimately spiritual sense in which they had not believed; the truth was, indeed, demonstrated to their *un-*

¹ John i. 41, 45, 49.

derstandings, but it yet required a different character of evidence to impress it on their *souls*. He whose eye beheld Nathanael beneath the fig-tree before Philip called him, gave no higher proof of his exalted character when He afterwards disposed at will the elements of nature; omniscience is as true a demonstration of divinity as omnipotence. Yet the proof, although not higher, was more constraining and effective; its influence was not modified by the mental constitution of the disciples; of *all* it is said without exception, that they “believed on him.” It was now for the first time that they acknowledged the constant presence, the sovereign influence, the exclusive and infinite moment, of spiritual concerns.

The case of the Apostles is one of no infrequent occurrence in the records of Christian experience. Many true disciples, many who acknowledge Christ from the heart as “the Son of God,” and “the King of Israel,” many who admit the demonstrations of a Paley and a Butler as conclusive and indisputable,—and who, as every thoughtful Christian must do, acknowledge the Bible their rule of faith and of practice, and offer from the heart the daily homage of prayer and thanksgiving,—have yet, in a sublimer sense, to believe. But at length Christ “manifests forth his glory.” Some remarkable dispensation of Providence, which can add, indeed, nothing to previous demonstration, impresses, however, the soul with more vivid conceptions of eternal realities. The velocity of time, the uncertainty of life, the muta-

bility of our earthly condition, become no longer the deductions of speculation, but the convictions of the senses. Acknowledged truths assume their legitimate proportion and influence in the thoughts. Belief attains a more solemn and spiritual elevation. The effect is not unfrequently the result of disappointments, of betrayed or ill-requited affections, and of personal suffering; but the death of those with whom we have been long associated in habits of friendship or sociability is commonly the most unequivocal and most effectual "manifestation" by which disciples "believe."

In the instance of Hannah More, the loss of Garrick appears to have been the "manifestation." It affected her with that profound and ever-present conviction of the inestimable value of time, in reference to the objects of eternity, which afterwards accomplished, by the hands of a secluded and sickly female, results of the most extraordinary magnitude; enabling her to instruct, with effect so electric, at once the saloons of Westminster and the hovels of the Mendip villages, in the same one thing needful for the prince and the peasant. In her "Sensibility," the reference to Garrick's death is brief, but touching:

"Tho' time his mellowing hand across has stole,
Softening the tints of sorrow on the soul,
The deep impression long my heart shall fill,
And every fainter trace be perfect still."

This anticipation was fully realized in after life. That Hannah was a "disciple" before this event,

and had been, even from infancy, is unquestionable. Her pen, active almost from childhood, had been exclusively employed on the side of holiness and truth; the stage, when it spoke by her voice, commended the gravest lessons of moral wisdom to the world; and her most trifling productions were never deficient in reference to those principles by which her heart and her conduct were habitually controlled. She had, however, given better proofs of discipleship even than these. Mingling extensively in the world of gaiety, and one of the most conspicuous objects of its adulation, she mingled with none of its vices, none of its dissipations; she had even courage to rebuke them, and yet tact and modesty, young as she was, to rebuke without offence. The Sabbath she inflexibly and inviolably kept holy; no artifices or solicitations could prevail on her to abandon her calm and sacred seclusion for the most brilliant Sunday evening party which the wit and information of the metropolis could assemble. But, although a genuine and a devout Christian, she had not yet been animated to the full development of the powers she inherited for the amelioration of her species. The death of Garrick stamped on her mind the true character of all human fame;—even of the noblest,—that which attends the exertion of the intellectual powers. She had been accustomed to regard him, in the enchanted mirror of youthful fancy, as a creature of more than human mould; and the familiarity of personal friendship, and the influence of riper

years, while they qualified the romance of her views, endued them with the elevation and stability which belong to the calm convictions of reason. To know that the day must come when genius so bright, when accomplishments so splendid, must utterly perish, and leave their possessor the equal of the meanest clown, except so far as his devotion of the "ten talents" might have been more faithful and profitable, was a solemn consideration; but what was it to know that the day *had* come! The soulless tabernacle of one who had so long been the admiration of civilized mankind was a spectacle well calculated to suggest the only true and abiding use of intellectual endowments—the glory of the great creative Mind. The feelings of Hannah More on this occasion are drawn by her own expressive pen, in the letter which has already been cited in a note, as containing the particulars of her first interview with Mrs. Garrick after the solemn occurrence. "I went," she says, "yesterday with the Wilmots to pay a visit to the coffin. The last time the same party met in the room was—to see him perform *Macbeth*! He changed so soon that he was obliged to be soldered up. What would I have given for a sight of his face! Yet as it was, there was room for meditation till the mind burst with thinking. His new house is not so pleasant as Hampton, nor so splendid as the Adelphi; but it is commodious enough for all the wants of the inhabitant. Besides, it is so quiet, that he never will be disturbed till the eternal morning; and never till then will

a sweeter voice than his be heard." From this moment Hannah More appears to have resolved on the entire dedication of all her mental powers and acquirements, of all her influence, her time, her efforts, to the attainment of a crown which should not wither on her tomb.

The mode of executing her determination was, probably, not immediately decided. The demands of piety and friendship alike drew her at first to the side of Mrs. Garrick, and this circumstance afforded her the advantage of sufficient retirement to meditate and mature her plans. While a more solemn cast pervades her writings at this period, we may observe also a more inquisitive and active beneficence. The cases of Ann Yearsley and the afflicted Louisa enabled her to ascertain the powerful influence which her popularity with the great empowered her to wield, and thus induced and encouraged her to discover to what ends she might most beneficially direct it.

All this, however, required reflection; and, as she wisely judged, reflection consecrated and enlightened by prayer. To this object immediate retirement was indispensable. She did not now think herself permitted to indulge so extensively in the pleasures of literary and refined society, which, however pure and excellent in themselves, must necessarily interfere with the prosecution of those designs which she rightly felt herself the chosen instrument to accomplish. Sought after as her society was, no retreat within a tolerably accessible reach of the metropolis would have

afforded her the desired seclusion. She therefore fixed her abode in the parish of Wrington, about two miles from the village; a place at that time regarded at a formidable distance from London, and which no post even from Bristol visited.

While regret and astonishment pervaded the circles of which she had been so long the admiration and the delight,—while her resolves were successively assailed by inconsiderate ridicule and officious kindness,—while all the allurements which the present world contained for her were spread to reverse her determination—and while none could better estimate than herself the surrender she had made,—with the voice of friendship and regret sounding in her ears, like her own “inflexible” hero, who

“Dimovit obstantes propinquos,
Et populum reditus morantem,”¹

she put aside all obstacles, and hastened to her hermitage. Her motives, perhaps, were as little comprehended as those of the inexorable Roman; and there were some who, not improbably, regarded her exchange of courtly celebrity for rustic shade as scarcely less extraordinary a sacrifice than that of Regulus himself. They wore for a season the roses which have long mingled with their dust;—her amarant blossoms in eternity.

If the retired locality of Cowslip Green afforded her the opportunities she desired of communing

¹ Hor. iii. Carm. v. 51.

with herself in meditation, and with her God in prayer, and the study of his revealed will, it was not less favourable to the contemplation of Nature, in that tranquil, tender, and cheerful mood, in which, as in the whisper in Horeb, her Author's voice is rather wont to be perceived and recognized than in the more imposing forms of whirlwind, earthquake, and tempest, which agitate her bolder scenes. The cottage, except by the growth of the trees then planted, is little altered from its appearance in 1785, when Miss More first took possession of it. It is only one story high; the roof is thatch: a smooth lawn, with a few shrubs and trees, fronts the window of the drawing-room, which looks towards the south. A border of flowers runs nearly round the walls. Situate in the midst of the bright and fertile vale of Wrington, Cowslip Green commands a variety of exquisite views. On one side of the lawn rises the abrupt hill on which the noble mansion of Aldwick Court has since been erected. To the south spreads the rich and sylvan valley, bounded by the dark outline of the Mendips, with their warm-tinted herbage and dusky woods, casting out in bold relief the picturesque village of Blagdon, and the "magic garden"¹ of Mendip Lodge, with its noble terraces of

"Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view;"²

¹ Is that a magic garden, on the edge
Of Mendip hung? even so it seems to gleam.

Bowles' Days Departed, or Barnwell Hill.

while between them the cottage roofs and venerable tower of Burrington shelter in the leafy skirts of their bold and rocky coomb.

In this small but tasteful cottage nothing was wanting to adorn and improve the active and holy leisure of its gifted inhabitant. Her little library was augmented by the sedulous contributions of friends, anxious not only that she should bear to her retreat some memorial of their affection, but that she might still continue, though at a distance from the resorts of wit and learning, to commune largely with the wise and intelligent. And her writings, even during this period of grave meditation, evince that she saw no inconsistency between the devoutest piety and the cultivation of elegant literature and taste. The poems of "Florio" and "Bas-bleu," published in the year subsequent to her settlement at Cowslip Green, lively, brilliant, and abounding with knowledge of "fashionable life," were as universally admired by the classes for whose benefit they were written, as though they had not been the production of one who was singular enough to think there were in time and eternity objects preferable to their continual

The builder of this beautiful mansion (the late Rev. Dr. Whalley) was the early and steady friend of Hannah More, and one of the seats in his grounds was consecrated to her name; which that was is not accurately known, but from the situation of that which has been represented in this chapter (immediately facing Cowslip Green) it is probable that this was the seat in question.

² Par. Lost, iv. 139.

society. The former of these, dedicated to Horace Walpole, was a great favourite with that eminent arbiter of fashion and virtù; and the latter was styled by Dr. Johnson “a very great performance.”¹ And while the poems themselves are replete with every grace of diction and style, they also distinctly track the channel of the writer’s studies, who was evidently imbibing at that time, with no undiminished fervour, the pure streams of Latian and classic English lore. So unjust to religion is the opinion that it cannot consist with intellectual cultivation, of which it is indeed the parent and the nurse. It was during the last five years of her life that Mrs. More gave a striking exemplification of her views on this subject. She had been reading Shakspeare, in whose writings she intensely delighted, when a Calvinistic friend, to whom she made some observation on the subject, replied, “No book for me but the book of Christ.”² Mrs. More immediately rejoined, “All cannot be so moral as you.” When it is remembered with what supreme reverence Mrs. More regarded “the book of Christ,”—how diligently she studied it,—how un-

¹ “Miss More has written a poem called ‘Le Bas-bleu,’ which is, in my opinion, a very great performance. It wanders about in manuscript, and surely will soon find its way to Bath.”

Piozzi’s Anecdotes.

² In her moral sketches (“High Profession,” &c., Works, vol. iv. p. 326.) Mrs. More has the following remarks on persons of this description:—“The persons in question have little turn

reservedly she submitted her whole course of life to its guidance and authority,—how truly religion was the soul of her life,—the force of the rebuke will need no comment. The position here re-proved differs indeed from that of the Caliph Omar, as the Bible differs from the Koran; but in its hostility to literature it differs not. The Alexandrian library would have met no better fate from the Christian devotee than from the Mohammedan. But the accomplishments of Hannah More were not merely agreeable recreations. She had learned from “the book of Christ,” and from the example of one of its most illustrious penmen, how valuable an instrument is human learning for recommending, diffusing, and impressing the truths of God. She made it bear its part in the great work to which her mind and

for books. Might it not usefully fill many a vacant gap, were they to devote a little of their leisure to *rational reading*? There is much valuable literature which occupies a large intermediate space between strictly religious and frothy books. History, well chosen travels, select biographical works,—furnish not only harmless but profitable reading. The study of these would improve their views, and, by expanding their minds, furnish them with topics for general conversation and useful reflection. It would enlarge their charity; by letting them see that many authors are not wicked, though they do not always confine their works to religious discussion.” “Such books might correct their taste, without deducting any thing from their stock of piety, except perhaps the phrases which disfigure it; would give them a relish for better society, and thus turn their waste moments to some profit.”

efforts were dedicated,—His glory. Even in the slight fugitive pieces just mentioned, this object is never lost out of sight. Religious principle, as directing the actions of life and the intercourse of speech, is the centre and spirit of these poems. The feelings of Florio, on his settlement in the country, seem unconsciously traced from her own experience of city tumult and rural retirement :

“ A thousand cheerful thoughts arise;
 Each rural scene enchants his eyes;
 With transport he begins to look
 On Nature’s all-instructive book;
 No objects now seem mean or low
 Which point to HIM from whom they flow.
 A berry or a bud excites
 A chain of reasoning which delights,
 Which, spite of sceptic ebullitions,
 Proves Atheists not the best logicians.
 A tree, a brook, a blade of grass,
 Suggests reflections as they pass,
 Till Florio, with a sigh confest,
 The simplest pleasures are the best!
 Bellario’s systems sink in air;
 He feels the perfect, good, and fair;
 As pious Celia rais’d the theme
 To holy faith and love supreme,
 Enlighten’d Florio learn’d to trace
 In Nature’s God the God of Grace.”

While Miss More was as warm an advocate of elegant literature and severe science as those who profess to see in these things all that is necessary to the regeneration of mankind, she could not discover their power to transform and renew a vitiated moral nature. She had seen numerous cases where these objects had been cultivated with the utmost assiduity, but where the heart still retained its corruptions; and in instances where

mental and spiritual cultivation were combined, she could as invariably trace the precious ore to purer veins than those of philosophy. It may be doubted whether, at this period of her life, the public mind was quite prepared to endure the notion of a national seminary from which religion in every shape was to be studiously, formally, and avowedly excluded; such a project would, doubtless, have been no less startling to many than the proposal that every individual should burn his Bible.¹ But a Bible unread is as useless as a Bible burnt; and an education *merely professing* to include religion is no better, though more decent, than an openly unchristian university.² How far this real neglect of religion in the instruction of youth, while homage was externally paid to the principle of a religious education, may have ultimately contributed to the rise of institutions explicitly discarding Christianity from their notice,

¹ It is instructive in these days to the political philosopher who does not hold the records of history to be waste paper, to be reminded that the *Atheists* of France recommended *Schools without religion*. M. Manuel, in his letter to the National Convention, (1793) writes: “*No religion must be taught in Schools which are to be National ones. To prescribe one, would be to prefer it to all others.*” The course of our narrative will compel the resumption of this subject presently.

² What would have been Mrs. More’s opinion of such an institution may be inferred from some observations of her own, for which see Appendix (V.) It may be here remarked as curious that Socrates, or (more properly, perhaps,) Plato, has pronounced the gravest rebuke on the dissociation of human learning from religious wisdom:—Κινδυνεύει τό γε τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν κτήμα, ἔαν τις ἄνευ τοῦ βελτιστοῦ κεκτημένος ἡ, ὀλίγακις μὲν ὠφελεῖν, βλάπτειν δὲ τὰ πλείω, τὸν ἔχοντα αὐτό.”—*Alcibiades*, ii. cap. 6.

belongs not to this work to consider: it may, however, suggest to those who perceive the connexion, that a Christianity which *contents* itself with forms, will soon be contented without them. But the evil, undoubtedly, was widely prevalent. The education of the higher class of females has been already noticed: while, however, that of the other sex was, unquestionably, more rational and more intellectual, and the forms of religion were regularly observed in schools, little care was taken to imbue the youthful heart with its practical and vital principles. And it is, perhaps, no extravagantly violent supposition, that our teeth may at this moment be set on edge by that sour grape eaten by our fathers; and the ignorance of the Scriptures, and of ecclesiastical antiquity,—the rash conclusions carried into precipitate practice, the wild vagaries of opinion,—the heresy, schism, infidelity, and folly which characterize an age unrivalled no less in these things than in its arrogant self-sufficiency and intellectual pretension, may be partly traced, without any excessive improbability, to the cold and formal inculcation, in our schools, some half century ago, of the vital and energetic Christianity of the Church of England.

While the education of the higher stations was thus imperfectly administered, maxims equally pernicious to the lower were no less implicitly received: maxims which, to the disgrace of our boasted advancement, are not wholly extinct at the present day. It was forgotten that the very principle of Protestantism claims the Bible as each

human being's indefeasible heritage; and persons who never dreamed of relinquishing the appellation of Protestant seemed to lose sight of the obvious fact, that the possession of a Bible to one who could not read it was a right scarcely worth any very strenuous contention. Some undefinable connexion, which reason is not very forward to allow or perceive, between the mere capability of reading and insubordination to a man's temporal superiors, had nevertheless become extensively acknowledged; and disbelief in its existence was by some almost regarded as infidelity. The instruction of the poor in those truths and duties which are as much their concern as that of the prince was blindly confounded with that spurious knowledge which "puffeth up,"¹ (now facetiously called "useful" for ploughboys and journeymen,) and which reaction on this false maxim has so extensively generated. It seemed assumed that the poor man's practice of his duty would bear an inverse proportion to his knowledge of it.² "He might learn enough at church," was the common reply to all objectors; but it was forgotten that he who could read his Bible at home also, would at once be better disposed for his church, and better enabled to derive from its services and its pulpit the blessings which each was respectively adapted to dispense. It was to the prevalence of such views that Eng-

¹ See 2 Cor. viii. 1.

² Mrs. Jones's dialogue with Farmer Hoskins in "The Sunday School," is a representation of an every-day scene in those times.—See Works, vol. iii. p. 303.

land owed a peasantry easily misled by the arts of spiritual quacks and seducers;—an unoccupied soil, where, “while men slept,” the enemy could readily sow his tares. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, active from the earliest days of its existence, had done much to counteract the mischief, by the establishment, so early as the year 1700, of parochial schools; and the colossal efforts of the National Society, now educating upwards of half a million of children in the communion of our church, have done much more. Yet while opposition to the education of the poor systematically prevailed, little, comparatively, could be effected; and England, to this day, in her lower, as in her higher society, is suffering the consequence of neglected or inadequate religious education.

This condition of the national education could scarcely, under any circumstances, have escaped the active and acute observation of Miss More. But there existed, in her case, especial causes to determine her energies in this direction. Educated herself as an immortal and accountable being, and employed, almost in childhood, in the prosecution of the same great work for others, the prevalent absence of religious training which she everywhere saw, impressed her by its very contrast. In this, and truly, she believed she could perceive the real cause of that practical infidelity which pervaded the upper walks of life, and of the savage profligacy which too generally disgraced the lower. Vast as the attempt might seem to compass a na-

tional reformation, she felt that a consequence no less mighty was involved in a purified education of the young. Here the object was, at least, definite; the principle, simple. Here then it was that Hannah More appeared to find the platform she desired for the erection of the powerful enginery by which, as a mental Archimedes, she was to move the world of morals. Her plans of beneficence took a wide range; she knew, that to effect much, she must aim at more; and it does not appear that she bounded her views of spiritual improvement by any narrower limits than those of the whole British Islands. In regard to temporal circumstances, she certainly drew no boundary. The palace, the mansion, the farm, the cottage, were equally the objects of her Christian ambition. She resolved to concentrate all her endowments and all her energies on an object at once worthy her best exertions, and for which her opportunities and habits had peculiarly adapted her. In the country, her pen had leisure to instruct the rich and fashionable; while the rustic labourer, to whom the pen could win no access, was within the reach of personal instruction. From this time, therefore, Hannah More appears in a higher character than the idol of coteries, and the toast of literary adorers. She is the fearless and eloquent prophetess,—careless of personal consequences while true to her commission and her duty;—the Cassandra, who, however discredited, ridiculed, opposed, calumniated, still is found unmoved in her high vocation—the inculcation of **THE TRUTH**.

CHAPTER V.



“Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world; both high and low, rich and poor, together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.”—*Ps. xlix. 1—3.*



THE summer of 1787 was almost wholly spent by *Mrs. More* (for about this time she adopted this alteration of her style) at Cowslip Green; and here she constructed her first methodical battery on vice and error, under the title of “Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society.” She had associated freely with this class of the community, and was therefore sufficiently acquainted with their habits and practices to treat them fully and correctly. As the most influential portion of society, the reformation of

this class was, in general, the most important to the purification of the national morals. "Reformation" (she truly remarks) "*must* begin with the great, or it will never be effectual. *Their* example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and characters. To expect to reform the poor, while the opulent are corrupt, is to throw odours into the stream, while the springs are poisoned."¹ In 1788, the work appeared anonymously. She appears to have been apprehensive that the publication of her name might have subjected her to invidious charges, which, though contemptible in themselves, might have impaired the influence of those arguments which she wished to make their impression by their native force. The book was frequently canvassed in Mrs. More's presence; and, once, while dining at a party at Mrs. Garrick's, she was abruptly asked by a noble guest, whether she could conjecture who the author was? to whom, with great promptitude and self-possession, she replied, "Whoever it may be, I doubt not the writer was in earnest." But the authoress did not long remain unknown. Although not prefixing her name to the work, she made no

¹ Thoughts on the Manners of the Great (Works, vol. xi. p. 56.) The same truth is observed by Cicero, (de Legg. iii. 14.) "*Licet videre, si velis replicare memoriam temporum, qualescunque summi civitatis viri fuerunt, talem civitatem fuisse; quæcunque mutatio morum in principibus exstiterit, eandem in populo sequuturam.*"

secret of the authorship among private friends; and internal evidence betrayed the truth to many who were otherwise unacquainted with it. It is said that one of the earliest to pierce the disguise was the most illustrious lady of the day, on whom the work made a serious impression. Much to the credit of the fashionable people of that period, Mrs. More, by this step, lost none of her popularity. The malevolence or misconception excited in some quarters was far more than compensated by the admiration which the work produced in others, and by the reflection which it had aroused in all. Seven large editions were sold in a few months, the second in little more than a week, and the third of them in *four hours!* A book so universally read could not fail to be influential, and its influence was soon traceable in the abandonment of many of the customs which it attacked. The elaborate hair-dressing which employed incalculable hands during the sabbath services of the church soon altogether disappeared, the example being set in the highest quarter; the perquisite of card-money rapidly diminished; the Christian master no longer pleaded for the practice of employing his servant to tell conventional falsehoods; and Sunday concert-parties of sacred music, even if unobjectionable in themselves, were seen to produce a large proportion of evil by the necessary desecration of the sabbath on the part of coachmen and servants. For all these improvements, society is very mainly indebted to the pen of Hannah More.

With some it may, perhaps, be matter of sur-

prise that, in this her first work on national reformation, Mrs. More should strike rather at practices than principles; since none was more entirely convinced than she that principle was the only perennial fountain of practice; and that, principles once corrected, practice would, of necessity, be purified. But she did not act without her reasons. The errors which she sought to amend proceeded rather from averseness to the entertainment of the principle than from deliberate resistance to its authority; and this absence of reflection would have denied an audience to a treatise on speculative principles of conduct, however they might be sanctioned. In practices, however, there was somewhat tangible. These might be exposed in a manner at once clear and interesting to those who had thoughtlessly indulged them. The removal of the evil practice was in itself no unimportant good; and the transition from the practice to the principle was less abrupt than the immediate inculcation of the latter. It is nature's order of reformation. The weeds must be extracted before the seed is sown.

“Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia *prima*
Stultitiâ caruisse.”¹

It is, moreover, the scriptural and providential order. “Cease to do evil,” precedes “learn to do well.” “Legality precedes morality in every individual, even as the Jewish dispensation preceded the Christian in the education of the world

¹ Horat. lib. i. epist. i. 41.

² Is. i. 16, 17.

at large.”¹ The “Thoughts on the Manners of the Great” were only a portion of an entire work (itself forming a department of her scheme for general religious reformation) which was afterwards completed by an essay entitled “An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World.”

While occupied with this task, her imagination was not idle, and was equally consecrated to the same great object,—the cause of truth, religion, and charity. About this period she had begun to cultivate a stricter intimacy with the eminent Mr. Wilberforce, and to form the acquaintance of the Rev. John Newton, rector of St. Mary’s, Coleman Street, London. The latter, in early life, had been successively the servant of a slave trader, and the mate and master of a slave ship, and was thus enabled to confirm the facts respecting negro slavery, which the senator was then urging with all the zeal of humanity, and all the might of eloquence, upon the indignant notice of the British legislature. In Bristol, too, Mrs. More had possessed frequent opportunities of information on the subject. She had even seen, as she informs us in a note to her poem, the chains and torturing instruments employed to coerce the slaves on their voyage. The inhuman commerce thus brought before her in all the horrible minuteness of detail and glow of declamatory description, Mrs. More felt it her duty to use her influence against it. She accordingly composed a poem, called “The Black Slave

¹ Coleridge, in Southey’s *Omniana*.

Trade," which was published in 1788. As no misconception could here mar the influence of her name, which was considerable, it was not published, like the "Thoughts," anonymously. The precise effect which this poem produced in the advancement of the good work is not easy to assign: many other causes were concurrent in the same happy direction. It was, however, highly commended by the bishops and influential clergy; and it was widely circulated and eminently popular.

Up to the year 1789,¹ Mrs. More, whose literary and distinguished acquaintance was now become commensurate with every name entitled to those designations, combined her rural solitude with occasional visits to importunate friends, and rambles through the picturesque neighbourhood of her dwelling, extending that term to fifteen or twenty miles from home. Such relaxations, indispensable to a mind always propense to overwork an infirm frame, never withdrew it from its watch-tower. They enabled her, on the contrary, to treasure up many valuable facts and hints, and to prepare her friends to countenance and advance her plans of philanthropy.

It was in one of these rural excursions that Providence opened to her "a great door and effectual" for the prosecution of her benevolent designs, as regards a large and important portion

¹ It was in this year, that during a sojourn with Bishop Porteus at Fulham, Mrs. More composed the amusing trifle entitled "Bonner's Ghost," which was printed by Horace Walpole, with all the elegance and luxury of the Strawberry Hill press.

of society. The romantic and grotesque cliffs at Cheddar, about ten miles from Cowslip Green, were then, as now, the resort of pleasure-parties for many miles round. The wild and solemn character of the scene,—the sunless hollow between the leafless rocks,—the caverns yawning beside the path, and the quaint forms overhanging it, where some giant chisel appears to have broken the vast material into the rudiments of ecclesiastical architecture,—found their parallel in a population no less rude and peculiar. Although events of which we are about to speak have produced a material alteration in the condition of the Cheddar peasantry, some traces of their former barbarism are still in existence. It is not more than four years since that the writer visited the last surviving inhabitant of a *cave* in the Cheddar cliffs. The abode, far better adapted for a sepulchre than a dwelling, extended a considerable distance into the rock. A narrow fissure served to carry off the smoke, while the inner part of the cavern, ceiled with stalactite, was on every side dripping with damp. A rough wooden door, rudely following the outline of the cavern's mouth, was the only protection against external violence. In this habitation a human being had existed for upwards of thirty years. This woman, wild and squalid as her dwelling, was only an individual of a class, who, though inhabiting more humanized abodes, were neither less ignorant nor less barbarous. Females, whom nothing but their female garb

could associate in the traveller's mind with an idea of the sex, hung on his path at every step, vending the mineral productions of the country and the seeds of "the Cheddar pink,"—offering their assistance to exhibit the most interesting points, and recount the tales and traditions connected with them,—and not unfrequently, engaging in furious and even sanguinary contention, when any of the unsightly sisterhood appeared to have been more successful in such attempts than the rest. This class, of which some few samples remain at present, was, at the time of Mrs. More's first visit to Cheddar, little worse than a specimen of its humbler population. Here, then, appeared a field amply requiring the exertion of those powers which she had retired to cultivate and apply. Yet it might well seem calculated to bid defiance to any agency short of miracle. But Hannah More remembered that the blessing of God, even when not miraculously visible, may yet be effectively present; and in prayerful reliance on Him who can turn the wilderness to the garden of the Lord, she reflected what human measures would be most likely to succeed, resolving, "in the power of His might," to adopt whatever an enlightened conscience might approve, with steady courage and with vigorous promptitude.

Providence had prepared the way for this great work, by blessing the assiduity of the Misses More with an ample competence. They had already built a house in Great Pulteney Street, Bath, and,

in January, 1790, they retired from the labour of tuition to take possession of it. From this time, Cowslip Green, and the house in Bath, became the common property of all the sisters, who resided alternately at each. Hannah met with a ready co-operation in all her views from these excellent relatives, whom she now regarded as her chief instruments in compassing the mighty results to which she aspired. In particular, the youngest, Martha, entered warmly into the scheme; and now no time was lost in commencing operations.

On revisiting Cheddar, Mrs. More's first inquiry regarded the spiritual superintendence of the people; which was, undoubtedly, lamentably defective. The vicar, an aged man, was not in residence, nor was there any resident curate; no clergyman had resided in the parish for forty years. Two weekly services and one sermon was the whole amount of pastoral care enjoyed by the inhabitants of Cheddar; and the attendance of twenty persons at these was a full congregation. It can scarcely be necessary to inform the reader that the laws of the Church of England, if properly enforced, would have remedied this grievous abuse; but the parishioners were too deeply sunk in ignorance and profligacy to be sensible of any existing grievance, and were well contented to remain undisturbed by the topics of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." They did not, it seems, according to the theory advocated by the patrons of a "voluntary church," go in quest of those religious privileges which a little

exertion and scarcely any expense would have infallibly enabled them to realize. Instances like these are the best arguments against visionary projects. The evidence of experiment is irresistible: the weight of one fact is enough to crush a host of pismire hypotheses. The provisions of an established church were suspended at Cheddar, and the consequence was barbarism and paganism. Nor is there any thing so distinct in the moral constitution of the Somersetshire people as to make us conclude that the experiment would produce in other places a different result. The destruction of the church establishment for the substitution of a "voluntary system" would only make a Cheddar of the entire kingdom.

As there was no probability that Mrs. More could either prevail on the vicar of Cheddar to tend his charge more carefully, or on the parishioners to present him in the bishop's court,—and as little could be hoped at once from the adult generation; the only practicable course was evident:—the instruction of the children. The benefits of parochial week-day schools, originated by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, had been long apparent; and the idea of Sunday schools had a few years before been so successfully realized by the benevolent Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, that, at the time of which we are now treating, not fewer than 250,000 poor children were receiving instruction in those establishments. It was, probably, his example that reminded Mrs. More of the possibility of connecting a private

school with the public provisions of the church.¹ But the idea was still more likely to have arisen from the schools already established by Mrs. Trimmer, whose character and labours bear a close

¹ Hardy assertors have not shrunk from the affirmation that Mr. Raikes was a Dissenter, and that the Dissenters were the first originators of Sunday Schools. Among the many obligations of the cause of truth to that noble Christian institution, the Bath Church of England Lay Association, is the refutation of this falsehood in a shape to preclude the possibility of its revival. Sir William Cockburn, a leading and active member of that zealous body, actually addressed the Rev. H. Raikes upon the subject, and read, at the last meeting of the association, the following reply:—

“Dear Sir,

“I have great pleasure in replying to your inquiries, as I can reply most explicitly, and most confidently.

“My venerated uncle, Robert Raikes, was not only a member of the Church of England throughout the *whole* of his life, but he was also a most attached and devoted one.

“I should much doubt whether he *ever* entered a single place of worship *unconnected* with the Establishment, and he was uniform in his attendance at his parish church on Sundays, frequent in his attendance at the early prayers in the Cathedral on week days.

“His memory is still cherished by some of the oldest inhabitants of Gloucester, who would remember that though his mind overflowed with charity and good will to men of *all* denominations, his affections and allegiance were *wholly* with the Church of England.

“Yours truly,

“Chester, Jan. 1, 1838.”

H. RAIKES.”

This is very decisive; and it may serve as a proof of the recklessness of party, that the assertion here denied could ever have been made in the face of the facts, that Mr. Raikes's first coadjutor was a *clergyman*, and the first place to which the children were brought was *the cathedral*.

affinity to those of Hannah More. The Sunday schools in Old Brentford had been opened in 1786; about three years before. They were connected with the church, though a private charity; and had even then reclaimed from vice, idleness, and savage ignorance, many hundreds of poor children. They had been principally raised by the exertions and contributions of ladies, acting, however, in concert with the incumbent, the Rev. Charles Sturges, vicar of Ealing, with whom the plan originated. These schools had been followed up by the institution of schools of industry; and their success must have been known to Mrs. More, as they were not only in high repute through the patronage of the Queen, but they were described, together with many others of like character, in Mrs. Trimmer's admirable manual of practical benevolence, "The Economy of Charity;" a work addressed to ladies, with which it is impossible to suppose Mrs. More unacquainted; nor could she have been unimpressed by its simple eloquence of plain facts and clear deductions. It is, indeed, highly probable that Mrs. More had inspected these establishments herself; having been, as has been mentioned, on a recent visit to Bishop Porteus, who was a friend of Mrs. Trimmer, as well as a warm promoter of her schools; and whose palace is situate in a neighbouring parish. But, though the connexion of a private school with the parish church was manifestly feasible, there were, at Cheddar, formidable impediments.

Much could not be expected from the patronage

of the vicar: still Mrs. More would not disconnect her school from the church; for she would not do evil that good might come, and create a permanent schism for the purpose of producing a temporary reformation. The farmers also, and petty landlords, though apparently an inert mass, careless of every thing but their own ease and brutal enjoyments, would, she well knew, kindle into fiery opposition at the contact of religion; while the very parties whose benefit was chiefly contemplated would, of themselves, be the last to seek, or even to accept it.

The first thing to be done was to disarm the hostility of the petty landholders; and this our heroine, as she may be most strictly called, now set out to do in person, although in weak and delicate health, and the autumn far advanced. On inquiry at Cheddar, it appeared that the principal of these potentates was settled in the parish of Wedmore. Thither she proceeded. Here, however, she completely failed. The barbarian, like many who ought to know better, resisted her to the utmost. He would never encourage religion among the poor; it spoiled them, and made them idle and discontented. Nothing daunted, however, by this rebuff, Mrs. More returned to Cheddar; sleeping at a little inn on the road, as her journey and the protracted discussion did not permit her to reach her destination that day. At Cheddar she proceeded to attack others, less influential, but not unimportant to her success. While arguing with one

of these, a friend, who took great interest in her schemes, and to whom these pages stand deeply indebted, suggested to her adversary that the children could not rob orchards and attend Sunday schools at the same time. This argumentum ad *hominem* (if we may by courtesy so designate the being to whom it was addressed,) was a happy thought. It became Mrs. More's irresistible weapon,—the lance of Britomart, before which every champion of ignorance went down. They now all admitted that the scheme must be good, promised their hearty concurrence in it, and pledged themselves to do all in their power that might induce the poor to send their children. Difficulties, however, remained to be overcome on the part of the parents. Some would not send their children unless they were paid; a condition which Mrs. More, very properly, refused at once: others were apprehensive that attendance at the school would afford her a legal control over the children, of which she would take advantage to export them for slaves. But, deep as was the ignorance that prevailed, the scruples of the parents were for the most part overcome by the newly-converted allies.

Mrs. More now took up her quarters at a little inn in Cheddar, while arrangements were making for opening her campaign. A cottage was immediately hired for a school house; and, that she might cut off all temptations to retreat, she engaged it for seven years, and at a high rent. A religious and respectable woman was immediately

found to undertake the sabbath duties. On the opening of the school by Mrs. More in person, nearly two hundred children and young persons attended; some of the latter, distinguished for profligacy, and not unknown to the criminal jurisdiction of their country. Before the expiration of the year, great numbers of these could repeat the Catechism, read the New Testament, and answer plain questions on the great truths of the Gospel. During this time also, they had practically learned to hallow the sabbath, and been constantly brought to both services of the church.

After a short interval, a master and mistress were procured to instruct the children in the week. With instruction, industry was also combined. Useful work, especially sewing, knitting, and spinning was taught, and the profits given to the children. To procure information and materials for the last of these employments, Mrs. More actually visited most of the principal clothing towns of Somersetshire. The parents, who, though they had never heard of Adam Smith, had been much inclined to class the schoolmaster with the unproductives, began to see that there was something, after all, in Christian education; and prejudice and opposition gave way. They now came themselves for instruction in spinning, and soon took interest and pleasure in attending the devotional exercises also.

The mistress and her daughter were supplied with medicines and occasional sums of money for

distribution among the sick and needy; and they were instructed by Mrs. More to make their charitable visits spiritually beneficial, by teaching the ignorant and awakening the thoughtless, and bringing them to the school and the church. So faithfully was this duty discharged, that, a few years afterwards, almost the whole parish attended to the grave the remains of the schoolmistress, in whom all felt that they had lost their best of friends; the first who had aroused them to provide for that world on which she had entered, and the first who had made the nature of the provision comprehensible to their minds. For although, in strictness, Hannah More was the prime instrument of this happy work, her representative, resident and diligent, would naturally engross the prominent position in the eyes of the poor.

Two years after Mrs. More's first visit to Cheddar, a most able and zealous curate, the Rev. Thomas Drewitt came into residence, who cordially forwarded the work. Such was the blessing which attended this institution, that, in the year 1801, the congregation of the church had increased in about ten years to seven hundred, and the communicants, who had averaged fifteen, to about one hundred and twenty.

The effects of goodness, like those of sin, are rarely limited to single generations. This truth is nowhere better instanced than in the benevolent acts of Hannah More; nor does any one of these exemplify it more fully than the foundation of her

school at Cheddar. Dismissing altogether the consideration of the hundreds who were reared beneath her immediate instruction, and the generations consequently trained in good example, it may here suffice to remark that, at Cheddar, the good work has never been suffered wholly to decline. Close to the rude hut which formerly contained the whole establishment, has arisen a noble building, containing two school-rooms, and apartments for the master and mistress erected at a cost of upwards of 500*l.*; of which 50 pounds were bequeathed by Mrs. More; one hundred were the munificent contribution of the late Marquess of Bath; and the rest was principally raised by the subscriptions of the inhabitants, on the ground where, fifty years before, the attempt to lift the voice of instruction was an act of exemplary heroism.

From Cheddar, Mrs. More was led to examine into the condition of the neighbouring places, which was found to be only too similar. Thirteen contiguous parishes were without a resident curate. Her benevolence, only limited by the extremity of her physical powers,—and scarcely by that,—was immediately aroused to enlarged activity. The Cheddar system was ultimately extended over nine of the neighbouring parishes;¹ and before the expiration of the year, about five hundred scholars were in training. The course

¹ Axbridge, Banwell, Winscombe, Blagdon, Yatton, Congresbury, Wedmore, Shipham, and Nailsea.

was very simple, and, perhaps, more closely approaching that of the National Society than any thing which had before been attempted. There were four classes: Bible, Testament, Psalter, and Catechism and Alphabet. There was also in use a kind of simplified catechism, called the Mendip School Question-Book; and the Church Catechism, broken into short questions, was used as in the National Schools. The first lesson was always Luke xv.; then followed the parables generally; then the first three chapters of Genesis. The 51st Psalm, the 19th and 53d chapters of Isaiah, the Sermon on the Mount, some others of our Lord's discourses, some of Watts' Hymns, and the collect for the day, were committed to memory. When the school met on Sunday mornings, the rules were first read: a suitable prayer, a hymn, and a part of the 34th Psalm always formed part of the proceedings. The schools attended both services of their respective parish churches. At five o'clock they were dismissed with prayer and a hymn. Finding that what the children learnt at school was commonly lost at home, through the profaneness and ignorance of the parents, Mrs. More invited these, together with the elder children, on the Sunday evenings, to the school, when a plain sermon, generally from Bishop Wilson or Burder, but always printed, though simplified by Mrs. More or her sisters in the reading, with a printed prayer and psalm, closed the exercises of the sabbath. On Wednesday evening there was a class of adults;

and on Tuesday, a plain exposition of the Scriptures by the master or mistress of the school.¹

Mrs. More's theory of education, described in few words, was *a suitable education for each, and a Christian education for all*. Accordingly, her scheme did not overlook a class, which, from the extent and nature of its local influence, was very far from unimportant:—the rising generation of the yeomanry. In the parishes where she had erected her schools, she had found this class no less ignorant and depraved than their poorer neighbours, and able, as well as willing, to keep their dependents in spiritual and mental degradation. To enlighten the farmers would be the most effective means of enlightening all around them. They were, besides, often called to the exercise of the most important duties. The grave responsibilities of the churchwarden's office were constantly administered by the hands of men who took the most solemn oath to exercise a trust which they did not understand, and occasionally resolved to betray,—till the office and officer were becoming by-words of contempt. The overseers of the poor, on whom the comforts always, and the lives not unfrequently, of the destitute absolutely depended, were taken from the same class:

¹ The explanations of the Scriptures given by the school masters and mistresses were brought forward on a subsequent occasion as proceedings of a schismatical character. The truth, however, was, that they were no higher explanations than such as every master of a national school is expected and required to make to the children; but which were, in this instance, full as requisite for persons of less tender years.

and the consequences, where this officer was selfish and callous, were obvious. Regarding the labouring poor as beings no less created for his use than his cattle, the Mendip farmer of those days resisted every plan which he thought calculated to diminish their toils for him, and every expense for their benefit which failed to return to him in the shape of their labour. The true antidote to this, as to every moral evil, was to infuse the spirit of the Gospel; to teach the proud master the just claim of his fellows in creation and redemption; to make him behold his poorer brethren, not only as creatures of one blood, but as actual representatives of the one Saviour of rich and poor, who has declared that he will dismiss the uncompassionate to everlasting punishment, with the retributive sentence, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."¹

With this view, Mrs. More encouraged the attendance of farmers' children at her schools, on the payment of small periodical sums. Here she met with no opposition. It was to the education of the labourer, not of himself, that the farmer objected. His ignorance prevented his estimating, but not his acknowledging, the value of learning, which it rather led him to exaggerate. Beside, it was now too late to keep his labourer in ignorance, and the only way of maintaining his own superiority was by acquiring superior knowledge.

¹ Matth. xxv. 45.

Writing and ciphering, he was well aware, were useful things, and he was willing to spare a trifle to secure these advantages for his children; and writing and ciphering, Mrs. More very readily allowed, were beneficial and appropriate knowledge for the boy of this class, who had, beside, more time to spare for their acquirement than the child of the day labourer. This addition, therefore, was made in the case of those farmers' children who attended the week-day schools; and the effects fully realized the expectation. The agricultural class became proportionally raised in the scale of spiritual and reasonable beings; and as they associated daily with those who were to be their future servants, the kindly affections of childhood were brought in aid of the commandments of the Gospel. This practice is now common in the Mendip districts; almost every national school deriving a part of its support from the contributions of farmers, who possess, by somewhat larger subscriptions, the privilege of presenting their own children, and of obtaining for them a superior kind of education. The funds of the school are thus augmented, and great public and private benefits attained. In Wrington the practice has long prevailed; and perhaps no rural parish is more honourably distinguished in the intelligence and respectability of its yeomanry.

Such was the sober and simple, and truly useful, course of knowledge pursued by Mrs. More. "My notions of instructing the poor," she says, in a letter to the Right Hon. J. Hiley Addington,

“are very limited. I allow *no writing*; nor any reading but the Bible, catechism, and such little tracts as may enable them to understand the Church service.” Nothing was done without the concurrence of the local clergy. “My object,” says Mrs. More, writing to Bishop Beadon, “is not to make fanatics, but to train up the lower class in habits of industry and piety. I know no way of teaching morals but by teaching principles; nor of inculcating Christian principles without a good knowledge of Scripture.”

The advantages of these schools soon became apparent to the respective parishioners. In some instances various principal inhabitants agreed, for the purpose of maintaining regularity, to attend them in turn, and to send their own children by way of example to their workmen. They even bound themselves, under pecuniary penalties, to fulfil the duties they had undertaken.

When the delicate frame and precarious health of Mrs. More are taken into the account, her personal labours at this time are almost incredible. While resident at Cowslip Green, or, afterwards, at Barley Wood, which was the greatest part of every year, she visited, in participation with her sisters, three parishes every Sunday; performing a circuit of from ten to thirty miles, usually being out about thirteen hours, and frequently passing the night in some of the villages. This was continued, with intermissions occasioned by sickness, for upwards of twenty years. Her labours were rewarded with unexpected success, and every in-

stance of advancement proved an additional stimulus to honour God no less with the first fruits of her conquests, than with those of her increase. She now gave prizes, pence for regular attendance; Bibles, prayer-books, &c., to the best proficient in learning and piety. A girl who continued to attend the school till her marriage, received on that occasion a pair of white stockings of Mrs. More's own knitting, five shillings, and a Bible: and clothing was distributed annually to the children. Writing to Bishop Beadon in 1802, on the subject of the Mendip schools, Mrs. More says, "FOR MANY YEARS I have given away annually near TWO HUNDRED Bibles, common prayer-books, and Testaments." When it is remembered that these books were not scattered at random, to fall into the hands of those who neither desired nor were able to use them, but were, in every instance, bestowed where a pledge for their improvement had been already given, how vast must have been the amount of good effected by these alone! What a mighty benefactor to latest generations does Hannah More appear, considered merely as the distributor of the word of life to thousands, whose hearts her tillage had prepared to receive and fructify it!

It next occurred to Mrs. More that she might at once attract scholars and achieve important good, by establishing, in direct connexion with the schools, benefit societies for women. With all the errors, both of calculation and practice, which had impeded the utility of benefit societies,

the principle was still excellent ; and it was open to any modification or improvement which its intended application in the present instance might render expedient. The proposal met with ready acquiescence from the mothers and near connexions of the children. In some of the parishes the number of members soon amounted to 150 ; and in less than ten years many hundreds of pounds were saved by this class for sickness and confinements. The payments in the former case were three shillings per week ; in the latter, seven shillings and sixpence at once. These advantages were secured by a subscription of three halfpence per week, and exact conformity to the school regulations ; and they had the effect of bringing many children to the schools whose parents would otherwise have been hostile or indifferent. Nor was the benefit restricted either to those parishes or to that generation. Most of these clubs subsist to the present day, and great numbers of others have sprung up in the surrounding parishes.

A practical knowledge of the rural poor has generally shown that an annual day of show and festivity is almost indispensable to the stability of a friendly society. Aware of this, Mrs. More did not neglect the observance in her female clubs, where it might be adopted with perfect security from those excesses which too frequently deform the anniversaries of friendly societies. Once a year her female clubs met, and attended divine service and a sermon at their respective parish churches ; after which they withdrew

to the schoolroom, which was gaily decorated with evergreens and flowers by the children of the members. Here they were served with tea and cakes by Mrs. More and her sisters. The neighbouring clergy and gentry were invited, and not a few of the most distinguished persons in the kingdom. A train of carriages extending no less than a mile has frequently been known to leave Mrs. More's residence on these occasions; nor have coronets and mitres disdained the thatched school-houses of Cheddar and Shipham. After tea, the society's accounts were examined, and the journal read. The latter recorded every important particular relating to the society and its members in the course of the past year. On these, Mrs. More herself, or one of her sisters, commented plainly, forcibly, and impartially.

The effects of these public displays may be well imagined. Every member of the club was aware that her conduct would be subjected to the exact scrutiny of the neighbours she most dreaded or respected, and of persons in whose presence, but for these institutions, she could never have expected to stand; and a strict correctness of morality, which, though it is not religion, is both indispensable to it, and favourable to its growth, was at once the consequence in many instances where laxity of morals had formerly borne its natural proportion to religious ignorance. A favourite excuse among the lower class for absence from church is "want of clothes." On these anniversaries, however, neat and clean apparel

was indispensable. Habits of frugality had made it easily attainable; and the thing once attained, the ground of the pretext, and the inclination to employ it, passed away together.

A similar festival was annually given to the school children; but as no single apartment could conveniently contain the assembled parishes, the summit of one of the Mendip hills was selected for the purpose. The same spot was not invariably chosen; but on every occasion the grand and expansive character of the scenery was in fine unison with a commemoration of which pure and enlightened benevolence was the animating spirit. The Tor of Glastonbury, the bold sweep of the Quantocks, the Bristol Channel with its islands and promontories, the mountains of Wales for an extent of thirty miles, the lower range of the Mendips, the distant hills of Gloucestershire, and the terraced heights of Bath, were commonly the majestic bounds of the temple whose dome was heaven, whose floor the living turf, whose garniture the rich blossom of the mingled furze and heather, whose sacrifice the gladdened and grateful heart, whose worship the voice of "babes and sucklings," turned from obscenities and blasphemies to praises and hosannas. Nor were the constituents of the assembly less diverse than those of the scene. The tones which swayed the court, the council, the senate, and the bar, mingled on these occasions with the rough jollity of a rude, but sober and orderly peasantry. A separate table was spread for the children of each parish,

where they were regaled with roast beef, plum pudding, and cider. At these celebrations not fewer than 1300 children occasionally assembled. To connect every thing with the Church, the clergy of the parishes said grace at their respective tables; and to combine loyalty with religion, "God save the king" was sung before breaking up.

It must not be supposed that this periodical and public demonstration of Mrs. More's objects, or even ten years' experience of the great advantages which she was conferring on her country, was sufficient to disarm hostility and opposition. The dissenters now became alarmed at her bold encroachments on the territory of ignorance. They had witnessed the brutal barbarism of neglected parishes, without one attempt to enlighten or convert; slumbering pastors and straying flocks kindled no indignant and compassionate zeal; but when Mrs. More, treading the steps of the good Shepherd, went "into the mountains"¹ to seek that which was gone astray and to shelter it, not in a fold of their devising, nor yet of her own, but in the pale of that church which was no less pure, true, and apostolical for the isolated delinquencies of its ministers, the *consciences* of its opponents became suddenly revolted, and every nerve was braced to resist Mrs. More's innovations. The attempt, which was no less impotent than malicious, may serve to

¹ See Matth. xviii. 12.

illustrate the fallacy of the very prevalent opinion, that the progress of dissent is attributable to the indolence of the clergy. There is nothing in the conduct of the Mendip dissenters which at all differs from what every person of ordinary observation may have remarked in other places. Where clerical superintendence has been defective, whether through inadequate provision or individual supineness, dissent has been, for the most part, unheard of; while, on the contrary, where pastoral means are abundant and well administered, its tabernacles invariably spring up in rank luxuriance. It is a parasite which derives all its vigour and verdure from that oak of ages which it aims to drain and destroy. Methodism, indeed, in the health of the church-blood that enriched its veins, has occasionally reclaimed spots from the wilderness; but the very partial success even of this wisely organized system may convince any reflecting and unprejudiced mind how insufficient are any means for Christianizing a nation which are not wielded by a church established and upheld by the state. The practical heathenism of the Mendip villages at the time of which we are now speaking affords no valid objection to this truth. They were such as they were, because the fault of individual clergymen in some instances, and peculiar circumstances in others, did not permit the machinery of the Church to be brought to bear. Thus the villages of Shipham and Rowberrow, whose inhabitants are *exclusively* employed in mining, were very imperfectly evan-

gelized, even after all Mrs. More's labours and expenses. The miner, little accessible during the week, spends his sabbath, when most innocently, beside his hearth in winter, and in summer on the side of some sunny hill. Even the boys who had been educated in the Shipham Sunday-school, and been regularly brought to church during the time of their education, had no sooner left, and become engaged in the local occupation, than their church was deserted, and the great truths they had learned practically forgotten. Nor must it be omitted, that Hannah More and her adventurous sisters possessed, in their sex, an advantage for the work they had undertaken which no clergyman could command. The rude barbarian, who would have spurned from his door the most conciliating of the ministers of Christ, had yet enough of manliness in his savage heart to abstain at least from outrage to woman. The original construction, too, of female clubs, whereby knowledge and competence were brought to the hearths of the most ignorant, depraved, and wretched, would have been an impossibility, humanly speaking, to any clergyman, in such a position of society.

The palliation of clerical negligence would be almost as sinful as the thing itself; in a clergyman, perhaps, altogether so. It is not, therefore, to justify ministerial indolence that a few considerations are here offered to the reader on the prevalent belief that the clergy of the last cen-

ture were generally remiss in their duty. On the general state of religion during the same period some observations will occur in the next chapter: suffice it here to say, that the popular standard was low; and though this is no excuse for those clergymen who debased the truth to meet it, it must in fairness be conceded that the clerical body at least maintained a decided religious superiority in society; while some of them were as eminent for piety and diligence as those of any other period before or since. But the duties of minister and people are correlative; and if the people *will not* do their part, the minister *cannot* perform his. If they flinch at unpalatable truths; if they say, with self-deceiving Israel, "to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits,"¹ the consequence is obvious; the minister lowers the requirements of the Gospel, or they desert him. In the former case, he is justly stigmatized as a time-server and a traitor; in the latter, he is most unjustly, but not the less certainly, reproached with his empty pews. Thus, in every instance, the clergyman bears the blame. The abolition of "the daily sacrifice" of prayer and thanksgiving in every church but the cathedral; the non-observance by public worship of those public days of joy and humiliation which the Church had consecrated in her purest times; the contraction of the sabbath services, in many places, into one only, and their alternate total suspension in

¹ Isaiah, xxx. 10.

some others; the distant intervals at which the life-giving grace of the Eucharist is, in most churches, afforded,—all these things are much less referrible to the inattention of the clergy than to the non-attendance of the people. When the daily sacrifice was wholly deserted; when the sabbath morning service in the country, and the evening in towns, was abandoned also; when the clergyman came into the desk on the holyday, and found none of his neighbours to join him; when he bade the congregation to the Lord's table, and "they all with one consent began to make excuse;"¹ it is at least nothing wonderful that he should have gradually foregone the unmeaning ceremony of presenting himself in the temple, where not even "two or three" could be gathered to meet him in the name of the Saviour. In regard to the instruction of the rising generation, the clergyman of the last century found prejudice and opposition where he might naturally have looked for patronage and support. The yeoman almost always, the squire not unfrequently, was actually hostile to the education of the poor. The expenses of a school were considerable; that of Cheddar cost nearly 100*l.* per annum; frequently the entire income of an incumbent.² There was then no National Society to assist the efforts of private benevolence; nor could an individual country

¹ Luke, xiv. 18.

² There are in England and Wales 4,361 livings (nearly one half of the whole) under 150*l.* per annum. Of these, some are under 12*l.*, and 1,350 are under 70*l.*—*Parliamentary Return*, 1815.

clergyman resort, for his single parish, to the source which was readily opened to Mrs. More for her *school union*,—the purses of great and influential persons utterly unconnected with the locality. It may be added that the parochial clergy in general fell in with Mrs. More's plans, and cordially promoted both her schools and her clubs. From the parliamentary return of 1815, it appears that there were no fewer than 4,809 parishes in England and Wales in which a clergyman *could not* reside, and more than one half of these had no parsonage at all. Non-residence, therefore, was, in many cases, compulsory. These facts must be taken into consideration, in order to a just estimate of the clergy of that time; who are not to be measured by the standard of an age distinguished from the last in nothing more than its activity, whether for good or evil; when the general subject of religion excites far more interest in the public mind, and when, if rashness and audacity in some quarters prevail above all precedent, just and sober views of religious obligation and church communion are, in others, rapidly making way; and means of spiritual benefit which had then no existence are daily rising into efficiency. Nor is the fact wholly undeserving observation in this place that the effective working of the Established Church, and the due superintendence of its parts, had been greatly crippled by an unconstitutional and most injurious measure resorted to for temporary purposes about half a century before. The perpetual dissolution of the

Convocation placed the Church of England, in a most important respect, behind every Christian communion in the world; there being no other instance, either among churches or sectaries, of a religious body without a deliberative council for the management of its internal affairs. One of the first and most natural consequences of this ill-advised and pernicious step was the disjunction of the clergy. Insulated from each other, and each labouring in a local charge, no order of men has naturally so few opportunities of meeting and conferring. But at the election of a proctor, the clergy of a diocese assembled; the qualifications of candidates were discussed; the measures which they were expected to advocate or oppose were debated; suggestions for the efficiency of religious provisions were thrown out; and while each clergyman returned to his parish aroused, enlightened, and prepared for duties and difficulties, the representative went to Convocation to realize the designs which his constituents had projected. Here, through their accredited organs, he had the means of learning what the clergy of other dioceses thought on the same and other subjects; and here, too, all could learn the opinions of their diocesans; and a wise, safe, deliberate, and uniform policy united bishops with clergy, priest with priest, and parish with parish. The clergy, too, were constantly under the eye of their diocesans and their brethren, and were working on a common plan towards the accomplishment of a single design. Such was the theory, and in great

measure, the practice, of the Church; and, without such a theory, it is evident such results would be unattainable. The suppression of Convocation split the ecclesiastical polity of England into as many fragments as there were cures; ganglions of vitality, little compensating for the extinction of the common head. The clergy, no longer under reciprocal inspection, were tempted to remissness; mutual communication suspended, private and party views found a natural inlet, and a common system for the government of parishes became impossible. To the dangers and evils of such a position, both clergy and laity were too insensible. The law forbade the admission of any but churchmen to the functions of legislation; and in this it was thought a sufficient protection for the Church might always be found. Those barriers have indeed been since removed; but it was not only external protection which the Church required for the due fulfilment of her high appointment; it was a vigorous internal self-legislation, whereby the spiritual requirements of the nation might be known and met as they arose; a quiet, insensible reform, whereby abuses might be corrected as they occurred; a constant, living energy to direct existing funds, or guide new springs of benevolence, into useful channels, and thus plant the church or the school wherever a population was outgrowing its spiritual supplies, instead of being terrified on a sudden at the necessity of doing something, and the impossibility of doing any thing adequate, for a mass of intractable

paganism.¹ Hence, too, the long neglect of spiritual means for our colonial possessions; the dreary and awful destitution of our East and West Indian, and our North American and Australian, settlements; the weakening of that only durable bond between the parent country and the colony, the profession of a common religion. Hence, also, the growth of party feeling between men who differed only in their speculative views, while equally devoted to the service of their common Lord; and who, if more frequently brought together, and acting on a common plan laid down by competent authority, would have discovered that a minute agreement in non-essentials was not indispensable to Christian fellowship, and that very distinct ideas on the quinquarticular controversy were perfectly compatible with the integrity of the Christian faith. Such as chose to limit the grand scheme of redemption to a few favoured souls, would nevertheless have hesitated to represent this as the whole Gospel, and arrogantly to dignify its preachers with the exclusive title of Evangelical; while those who took a more com-

¹ The following are some of the fearful particulars disclosed in the Second Report of the Church Commission. They refer to London alone:—

Parishes.	Aggregate Population.	Church-room.	Clergymen.
4	166,000	8,200	11
21	739,000	66,155	45
9	232,000	27,327	19
34	1,137,000	101,682	75

prehensive view of the Divine love would have borne in mind that the narrower theory had found advocates in men whose Christian sincerity and whose devotion to the Church of England was beyond all question; that Hall and Laud, Hammond and Beveridge, were alike steadfast and valiant for the truth.

Such were some of the causes contributing to a state of things which found a partial redress in the diligence and wisdom of one pious and prudent female. Nothing, indeed, can be more admirable than the just temperament of zeal and discretion which characterized the proceedings of Hannah More. In the former quality she was never surpassed; yet her system was free from every irregularity; and though in itself an innovation, and presenting to many minds, before it was well known, the image, at least, of an *imperium in imperio*, it was in strictest union with the church, and as completely incorporated with the parochial instruction of the minister as if it had been part of the ecclesiastical establishment. From a plan so wisely organized much might be expected, and much was realized, as will appear from a few random particulars which I now subjoin. I have not the means of ascertaining accurately the chronology of all Mrs. More's schools, nor is the point very important.

The school at Shipham was established in 1789. The rector, the Rev. — Penny, fitted up a house for the purpose, at his own expense. Of its effects his curate, subsequently his successor, the Rev. James Jones, gives the following account:

“In the year 1775, I undertook the cure of Shipham, and found the poor in a very uncivilized state; the women generally destitute of industry and frugality; the young men spending the sabbath in sporting and hunting, and the children in wandering, idle, and almost naked.”—“I attend [the school] every Sunday, and it gives me pleasure to observe that the most regular attendants at church and sacrament are they who attend the school and reading. A weekly school of industry, and a benefit society for the poor women, were established here by Mrs. H. More; all which institutions, in a place of such extreme poverty, are eminently advantageous, and their good effects are evident in the gradual diminution of vice, and the growth of industry and morality. A general spirit of sobriety prevails among the young women. A Methodist meeting, which was in this place before the school was established, has been withdrawn long since. There is not a dissenter in the parish.”¹ The Rev. Lewis Hart, writing in

¹ The excellent and laborious pastor who penned the above statement was “prais’d, wept, and honour’d by the Muse he lov’d.” The following is his epitaph in Shipham church:—

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. JAMES JONES, RECTOR OF SHIPHAM,
WHO DIED JUNE 15, 1825, AGED 86.

FULL SIXTY YEARS HIS FLOCK THE SHEPHERD FED;
HIS PREACHING TAUGHT THEM, AND HIS PRACTICE LED.
VALIANT FOR TRUTH HE FOUGHT THE CHRISTIAN FIGHT,
NOT IN HIS OWN, BUT IN HIS SAVIOUR’S MIGHT.
E’EN WHEN DISEASE HIS WASTED FRAME ASSAIL’D,
STILL TO THE LAST TRIUMPHANT FAITH PREVAIL’D.

HANNAH MORE.

1801, draws a similar picture of the condition of Nailsea, of which he was curate. "During the first three years of my residence," he writes, "I, with little success, endeavoured by admonitions from the pulpit, and (as I thought myself authorized) by private advice, to restrict the immoral conduct of the poor. The hours appointed for divine service were spent by them in the ale-house, or in the amusements of pitch and toss, ball-playing, &c. Their children, neglected, were suffered to run wild in a lamentable state of ignorance and vice. About eight years ago, a Sunday school was established by Mrs. H. More. A great change for the better was soon apparent."—"The children were taught to read their Bible, and such books as accorded with the principles of the Church of England."—"The good example set by the youth operated on their seniors to produce an attention to their religious concerns, and to take them off from their vicious habits. And it affords me much pleasure to say that, on my departure from them in October last, they were a much more orderly, decent, and moral set of people, and regular in their attendance at church, which a numerous congregation evinced."

In 1790, an event already adverted to occurred at Cheddar, which proved how effective Mrs. More's system had been in Christianizing that parish. The schoolmistress, Mrs. Baber, then departed to her reward. She had, doubtless, learned much in her own school; and this simple, but true and exalted wisdom, had been faithfully applied, as it

accumulated to the souls of her scholars. The Rev. John Boak, Rector of Paston, near Peterborough, was then the diligent and effective curate of Cheddar; and to this gentleman I am indebted for a notice of this excellent woman's life and death. "I had long witnessed," he says, "her attention to the school, and her earnestness in impressing important texts of Scripture on the memories of the children; the good effect of which I witnessed in many of them." In the selection of these texts, she does not appear, like the enthusiast or the theorist, to have been influenced by a desire to support some controversial scheme; they were chosen for their solemnity and impressiveness, and there was no small originality both in their choice and application. One of these was, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."¹ From this she inferred the necessity of being Christ's servant, and the certain blessedness of those who deserved that designation. The argument was just, and the application, in her own case, certainly fruitful. She laboured as the servant of Him, with whom it was her best hope to be hereafter. "Almost in the very article of death," says Mr. Boak, in the sermon which he preached at her funeral, "I visited our departed friend, and heard her say, with a firm and steady voice, and with something like joy in her countenance, 'I know in whom I have believed. My

¹ John, xii. 26.

Saviour has said, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be;' but I am an unworthy servant, and it is all mercy; yet I can depend on the promises of Christ, on His merits and intercession.'” During her illness, she dwelt so much on this text, that Mr. Boak selected it at the funeral, where the attendance of a weeping parish attested how diligently and how effectively she had fulfilled her task.

In 1801, Mr. Boak writes; “I resided at Axbridge from 1784 to 1798, and during that period was curate of different parishes where Mrs. More had schools.”—“In all the parishes where I have been curate, I have found the schools to be particularly useful in bringing my parishioners to church and sacrament, and in amending their moral conduct. I have also observed them to be a powerful check to the growth of sectarism. The teachers have been loyal and peaceable, and firmly attached to the Established Church.”

Mrs. More had the gratification to meet with occasional proofs that she had “not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.” Thirty years after the establishment of the school at Cheddar, she attended the death-bed of one of the scholars. Had this been all the reward of her expense and labour, it would have been an abundant compensation. Two young persons, who, but for her interposition, would, in all probability, have lived in brutish ignorance, and died in desperate wickedness, had, through her instrumentality, imbibed from the

same lips the same lessons of truth and blessedness, and become partners for life, in the hope of proving partners for eternity. United thus in soul no less than in heart, they realized, in an humble station, happiness, which no other art than theirs can procure for prince or peasant. But the hours for which both had been preparing from childhood had now arrived,—that of affliction to the husband,—that of the great and final change to the wife. In a long and painful disease, the sufferer exhibited a uniform, sober, and enlightened piety, and passed into the eternal world with every appearance and expression of a well grounded hope, leaving to the surviving mourner the inheritance of the same blessed expectations, a sufficient support and consolation under a loss to which no earthly comforts could afford aught resembling an adequate remedy. Mrs. More had the satisfaction, in the course of her long life, to know that this instance was by no means solitary; and not only to see some of her scholars witnessing a good confession on their death-beds, but to rejoice in the industry and usefulness of others, whom she found in distant places and on various occasions, adorning in all things the doctrine of that God and Saviour whom they had learned to love and serve within the precincts of her schools.

The school at Yatton was established in 1791: but this and all the others expired with the eighteenth century, except Cheddar, Nailsea,

Shipham, and Wedmore; of which last a brief mention may be made.

In the autumn of 1798, Mrs. More, at the request of several clergymen, including the curate, carried her aggressive operations against vice and irreligion into that populous parish, situate about fifteen miles from Cowslip Green. Mr. Boak and Mr. Drewitt, for some weeks previous, acted as pioneers, and explained, especially from the pulpit, the nature and objects of the schools. Here, however, as at Cheddar, the opposition of the principal farmer was to be encountered; but he was more active and more methodical. He organized the farmers in open resistance; even the parish clerk, while Mr. Drewitt was officiating, gave notice of a meeting to oppose the school. The accusation was, "teaching French principles;" a charge which would almost seem to have been suggested by some waggish opponent for its very absurdity. The school was, however, opened, and a respectable attendance graced the opening. Mean while, the farmers had discovered that the schoolmaster, not having taken out a license, might be presented in the court of the Dean of Wells, whose peculiar the benefice is. A letter, written about this time by Mrs. More to the Right Hon. J. H. Addington, amusingly illustrates the state of knowledge as well as religion at Wedmore. "I cannot forbear telling you," says Mrs. M., "that the people in that quarter have been to the *fortune teller* to know if I am a Me-

thodist, and if my school is methodistical. The answer of the oracle was ambiguous, but inclining to the negative. She wished, however, to know on what their suspicion was grounded; and being told it was because they sung the new version of the Psalms, the Pythian declared there was nothing methodistical in that; but still sagely suggested that her decision of the question would depend on her knowledge of the *tunes*. This hint they caught hold of with eagerness, declaring they had now proof positive; for that none of the tunes sung at the school were in *Farmer Clapp's book*! Thus the point was settled! Now, don't you think that the folly of such opposers furnishes strong ground for one's persisting to make them a little wiser in spite of themselves?"

The master was, however, charged with methodistical practices, such as extempore prayer, &c., which he denied; but at last the parish, including the clergy, were of opinion that his school was not conducted on Church principles. The master was, accordingly, summarily dismissed by Mrs. More, and a satisfactory person substituted. It is pleasing to record, that the farmer who had accused the school of teaching French principles, afterwards sent his own family to the instructions and the readings. But the school had still to contend with great opposition, and was closed no long time after. The dismissal of the schoolmaster afterwards assumed a very disproportionate importance in an affair which it is the painful duty of the

biographer of Hannah More not to pass unnoticed. In the mean while, it will be necessary partially to retrace the period embraced in this chapter, for the purpose of developing a separate province of Mrs. More's activity, which could not, without some degree of confusion, be fully treated in conjunction with the subjects here discussed.

CHAPTER VI.

Fear God. Honour the King. 1 *Pet.* ii. 17.

THE reader not intimately acquainted with Mrs. More's history or energy will be little prepared to learn, that, during the time she was conducting schools and friendly societies in parishes extending over an area of about seventy-five square miles, she could find any other active occupation. She was, however, at the same time pursuing with no less ardour and activity a very distinct and far more extensive career of usefulness; so distinct, that it has been thought advisable to reserve the account of it for a separate chapter.

It has already been observed that the "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great" were only intended

to be part of a complete work, and, by the removal of bad practices, to clear the ground for the insertion of good principles. It does not belong to this place to enter at any length on the maxims which prevailed among the great of that period, and formed the foundation of their practice. It may, however, be noted, in a general way, that these principles were the growth of long habits, and the result of remote causes. Never was a truer position than that of Bishop Heber, which denounces the confusion of things evil only in their excess with things essentially sinful.¹ Intervals not merely of rest, but of amusement, are not only uninjurious, but actually conducive to the prosecution of active duties; and he who proscribes all public diversions in the gross, and denounces all participation in them as unbecoming a Christian, is not less indiscriminating than he who should forbid the use of wine, because it may be made subservient to intoxication. Both would alike be guilty of that "voluntary humility,"

¹ "Although his [Bishop Heber's] mind was deeply imbued with devotional feelings, he considered a moderate participation in what are usually called 'worldly amusements' as allowable and blameless."—"He thought that the strictness which made no distinction between *things blameable only in their abuse* and *the practices which were really immoral*, was prejudicial to the interests of true religion; and on this point his opinion remained unchanged to the last. His own life, indeed, was a proof that amusement so participated in may be perfectly harmless, and in no way interfere with any religious or moral duty."—*Life of Heber, by his Widow*, vol. i. p. 420, 421.

which is, in truth, the most offensive arrogance, as it virtually erects itself into a higher standard than His who "adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought," the marriage festival in Cana. This principle, which, under other circumstances and climates, produced the Anachorites and Stylites, appeared, under the dominion of the Puritans, in a fanatical hostility to the most innocent of diversions; not only confounding the dance and the song with the most atrocious crimes, but even intruding its austerities into the houses of God, expelling instrumental music, and demolishing the elaborate embellishments which pious art had consecrated to the service of the sanctuary. The consequences, at the Restoration, were such as might have been easily foreseen. A violent reaction ensued; the iron pressure of dominant fanaticism once removed, the sense of new-found liberty, and abhorrence of every idea associated with the oppressor, carried the public mind with irresistible elasticity to the opposite extreme. The example and influence of a luxurious court acted in the same direction, and London became a Sybaris. A voluptuous stage replaced an ascetic pulpit; and the ear, long stunned with the denunciations of Peters, was fain to repose on the blandishments of Rochester. This pernicious consequence long survived its cause. Of its effects on general society, under a very different government, the "Tatler" and "Spectator" are no equivocal witnesses. The ethics of a still later period are to be inferred

from the writings of Richardson, the great *moral* writer of his day; whose morality, however, has little in common with that of the Bible, and whose illustrations are so far from moral, that no Christian parent would permit many of them to the eyes of his children. To stem the deluge of ignorance and iniquity, the Wesleys had projected the institution of Methodism, which, in its beginning, was little more than a recall to the meditation of the Bible, and to the discipline of the Church. Had it so continued, a greater and more well-timed blessing to our country could not have been imagined. But its founders became tainted with unscriptural notions, and with errors on points of discipline; associating, besides, the wildest fanatics in their labours, who adopted the cant and austerities of Puritanism, to the disgust of sober Christians; while “the fashionable world,” whose vices had arisen in a manner out of those very severities, burst into fury at the very name of Methodism, with which, as a very natural consequence of its ignorance and impetuosity, it generally confounded every thing like religious seriousness, however scriptural and sober. Even a punctual observance of the public worship of the *Church* became stigmatized by many as *methodistical*; and thus, the Bible unread at home, and the lessons of the Church unheard, “the fashionable world” was little more than professedly Christian. Even the profession of Christianity was not universal: a Collins and a Hobbes, a Bolingbroke and a Shaftesbury, had been the legitimate off-

spring of a corrupted people: a Hume and a Gibbon were carrying on the work; and their writings made ready converts of those who had already found in the precepts of the gospel an insuperable argument against its evidences. The practices adverted to in Mrs. More's treatise on the manners of the great were the natural fruit of this state of the public religion. Having succeeded so well in her attack on some of the prevailing symptoms, Mrs. More now set herself in earnest to assail the disease itself, in its seat, the heart. Accordingly, in 1790, appeared, anonymously, "An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, by one of the Laity." In this work, Mrs. More traces her moral maxims to the religious principles which are their legitimate root and foundation; shows how much society had degenerated in regard to these; and from the neglect of religion in education, and that of public and family worship, deduces irresistibly the decline of Christianity as a principle of action. The authorship could not long remain a secret. Like its predecessor, the Estimate brought complimentary letters from all quarters to the writer. That it was extensively read is evidenced by the number of editions which it reached in two years,—five; and that it was extensively beneficial is unquestionable. Indeed, its statements are too firmly built on fact and just reasoning, to admit a suspicion, that, among the thousands who read it, it could possibly prove uninfluential. The book itself became *fashionable*; and fashion, however

variable, is not so inconsistent as to act the patron and opponent at once.

Shortly after the publication of this work, Mrs. More, for a short time, suspended her operations as monitress of the high and missionary to the low, at a call from a different quarter of philanthropy. A young heiress, a child of fourteen, had been entrapped into a marriage with a profligate, who was believed to be living with her in London. Even the rescue of this victim was not an enterprise beyond the hopes of Hannah More. She hastened to town; procured a proclamation in the Gazette for the arrest of the parties; took lodgings in the neighbourhood of Bow Street, and spent some days with constables and police officers in searching houses for the villain, until she ascertained that he had carried the unfortunate child to France. Just as Mrs. More was about to return, she received intelligence that a young woman who had attempted to drown herself had been taken to the Middlesex hospital. She immediately started with a friend for this place, and found that the poor girl had been conveyed to her lodgings. Thither she followed her immediately, paid the arrears of her rent, and brought her away, in the hope that, under her eye and admonition, she might be reclaimed from a life of sin. But her beneficence brought no fruit, except its return into her own bosom. The misguided creature had not only been corrupted by a life of wickedness, but deliberately poisoned by infidel books; and she returned

in desperation to her evil courses. The practical infidelity which had long prevailed in "The Fashionable World" was, as above remarked, now beginning to merge in open rejection of Revelation, until the counsels of Providence, which convert the most appalling evils to the most signal blessings, saw fit to arouse the Sadducees of fashion with a more startling reveillie than even the alarm of Hannah More could inspire.

Religious ignorance, together with practical infidelity, under the profession of Christianity, had, in France, already opened an inlet to speculative unbelief, with all its attendant enormities. Even under the comparatively mild and enlightened discipline of the Gallican Church, the Scriptures were theoretically withholden, and practically neglected among the laity; while the clergy, to whom, at least in the Vulgate Latin, they were not unfamiliar, certainly did not regard them as higher authority than the Dialogues of Gregory, or the "Flos Sanctorum." The truths of Christianity never appeared in any other company than that of the fables of Popery; and both were constantly represented as integral portions of a single superstructure based on a common foundation. There was no opportunity allowed for a Berean discrimination; and it is little matter of surprise, that a Christianity so unsound should give way on the first assaults of infidelity. The achievements of our Lady of Loretto, and of the warlike Apostle of Compostella, were easily borne down either by argument or ridicule; and those who

believed the foundation miracles of the Christian faith to be entitled only to an equal degree of credence, were, of course, easily seduced from the hopes of eternity. There existed also, in the depraved manners with which the profligate courts of the last two sovereigns had inoculated the French people, moral inducements to infidelity, more effectual than any skeptical theories. In a soil thus prepared, a less assiduous tillage might have realized an ample harvest of unbelief. But culture was not wanting. The antichristian conspiracy in France was conducted at once with a degree of forethought and energy worthy of the best of causes, and with a recklessness of instruments and consequences worthiest of itself. The abuse of terms has always been a favourite and effective instrument with the enemies of truth and goodness, who, to impose on popular credulity, have generally assumed the designation most opposite to their real character. Where the name of "skeptic" or "infidel" would have excited horror, the title of "*philosopher*," which is never so well appropriated as by the Christian believer, was precisely the most calculated to conciliate respect and confidence. The advocates of knowledge, the assertors of intellectual right, could never be opposed, even by such as knew their hollowness, without a *primâ facie* case of ignorance and bigotry against the opponent. The term "*Toleration*" was another of these abused words. The revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the long train of enormities consequent on

that atrocious act of Popish perfidy, had aroused the indignation of every heart in France, in which bigotry had not totally extinguished humanity; and enlightened opinions on the subject of religious persecution were gaining ground. Of this circumstance the infidel cabal were not slow to avail themselves. Under the disguise, then, of removing all persecutions for mere religious opinions, and securing to every man protection in person, property, and religious worship,—(a principle which every enlightened Christian must cordially approve)—it was sought to introduce, a system of religious proscription, persecution, and bloodshed, which would have more than surfeited the Jezebel of the house of Medici. The word *knowledge* was no less grossly perverted. Cheap and entertaining works, from the encyclopædia to the tract, adapted to all classes, ostensibly, for the purpose of propagating philosophical and useful information, but really to infuse the virus of infidelity, were rapidly brought out by the confederacy. The Encyclopædia was the great machine. The leven was disguised principally in articles on history or natural philosophy; those on religion openly advocating Christianity, though not without some insidious cavils. Persons of orthodoxy and reputation, unsuspecting of its object, allowed themselves to be associated in the work; and thus, under the specious covert of philosophy, reason, knowledge, civil and religious liberty, was nurtured the conflagration which was to devour them all; and which, after darkly smouldering through

the greater part of a century in the vitals of the social fabric, which it had already eaten away, burst at once upon the day through all the walls of the edifice, involving simultaneously all classes of society alike in indiscriminate combustion. Its first moral fruits were lawlessness and rapine; and the higher, as the richer and more defenceless, became the prey of the poorer. The practical part of the doctrine had too many attractions for want and cupidity to be long without its disciples in England. Happily, however, the Christianity of the English Church was of a firmer texture than that which the knife of Rousseau and the hatchet of Voltaire had so mercilessly shred away. Woven entirely from the tough web of the Bible, with no thread of legend and tradition to break away at the touch of ridicule, and disconnect the solid parts of the structure, it only required to be used. Like the adulterate Christianity of France, it had been too little acknowledged as a principle of life; but there was this difference: the acknowledgment, whenever made, was encumbered with no absurdity. In the Christianity of the Church of England there was nothing of which genuine philosophy could be ashamed; it courted the light and challenged inspection; and all that was needed was the honest and practical admission of its supreme claim. The great body of the people of England, too, with all their depravations, were loyal; and, accustomed never to separate the ideas of "Church and King," were attached to the ecclesiastical polity of their country, even when

least availing themselves of its provisions. Infidelity was so far from popular, that it was, for the most part, infamous, and that, too, among many who were too little heedful of the truths which they would have shuddered to dispute. The pestilence that was desolating the mind of France did not, therefore, communicate so much infection as alarm to her island neighbour. Still the doctrines of the French Revolution were not left to make their way in England by their simple accommodation to the depravity of nature every where. They had preachers and propagators who were disseminating the poison with Satanic diligence. Tracts of the most anarchical and blasphemous character were dispersed in the manufactory, the cottage, the workshop, and the mine. Sanatory precautions were immediately taken; yet these were not so entirely successful as to prevent sporadic cases of the disease: and the nation was not without apprehension lest the tempest which was threatening to overwhelm the mansions, palaces, and temples of France in noble, royal, and sacerdotal blood, might roll its sanguine deluge over the homes and altars of England.

Hannah More had not been an inattentive spectatress of political proceedings in France. The despotic monarchy of that country had never been exercised in the most paternal manner; nor did it seem likely that its insolence and oppression would ever be abated except by some movement on the part of its subjects. Lewis XVI., though personally virtuous and mild, had been

educated in the most arbitrary notions of prerogative; nor was it likely that, however disposed to exercise his vast power for the good of his subjects, he would spontaneously grant a charter of liberties, or a share in legislation, by which the power of his successors might be checked and restricted. Of all the devices ever invented for the maintenance and consolidation of an unqualified tyranny, none perhaps was ever so complete as the *lettre de cachet*, by which any subject, without trial, or even accusation, might be, at any moment, hurried to imprisonment for life at the mere will of the sovereign. How little soever it was possible for the Christian to approve of rebellion; how necessarily soever he must condemn the act of violence which prostrated that horrible engine of tyranny, the Bastille; still it was scarcely possible, at the time, not to entertain some hopes that these excesses might subside at length in orderly obedience to a form of government less unworthy of an intelligent people. Such hopes were cherished by many who were friends to genuine liberty; among them was the illustrious Edmund Burke; nor was Hannah More ashamed to be of the number.¹ Deploring and condemning the act of violence by which the Bastille was demolished, she yet believed she could see in this outrage only the ebullition of a people maddened with their wrongs, but ready, when righted, to submit themselves to the yoke of a monarchy limited by justice and law.

¹ Even the meek and *unpolitical* Cowper anticipated with delight the overthrow of the Bastille.—“*Task*,” v. 94, &c.

Like her distinguished friend, however, she did not long continue under this delusion. The spirit which animated the deeds of the party was soon too evident to her to be mistaken: and long before the darkest features of the revolution had attained their full proportion, England did not number among her sons or her daughters a more ardent antagonist of the revolutionary party than Hannah More.

Accordingly, in the year 1792, when violence and rapine, under the names of liberty and equality,—and atheism and blasphemy, called, by a like perversion, philosophy and reason, were preached and published among the peasantry of England through the agency of clubs and emissaries,—universal, almost, became the call on Mrs. More to arm in the most holy cause of religion and order. But the most importunate, perhaps, of her suitors was her friend Bishop Porteus, who urged her acquaintance with the habits and feelings of the lower orders, and her clear and vigorous style, as an irresistible call on her pen for some simple production, calculated to dispel the delusions so assiduously propagated among the vulgar. Nor was the appeal in vain.—With a modest distrust, however, of her success in a line of utility so different from any thing she had hitherto attempted, she published anonymously her admirable dialogue called “Village Politics; by Will. Chip, a Country Carpenter;” in which, by plain and irresistible arguments, expressed in language pure but universally intelligible, she exposes the folly and atrocity of the revolutionary

doctrines. The better to disguise the authorship, she employed Mr. Rivington, instead of her usual publisher Mr. Cadell, to introduce her pamphlet to the public. This device had a brief success, and Mrs. More was not a little amused by receiving numerous copies of the tract from her friends, accompanied by the warmest commendations, and the most earnest entreaties to give it the widest possible circulation. But long concealment was impracticable; and while all were praising the work, the more discerning began to congratulate the authoress. Its circulation was incalculable; some thousands were purchased by Government for distribution: it was reprinted by societies and individuals; it was translated into French, and even into Italian, with such accommodations as suited the Papal government; and there is every reason to believe that this clear, concise, and sensible statement of a question which was then perplexing and insnaring thousands had a very considerable effect in reclaiming the deluded, and fore-arming the sound.

A pious theism erected on the *rejection* of Revelation is a mere chimera, of which no instance can be produced. The French infidels at first spoke with almost devotional reverence of the Supreme Deity, who as they allèged, was dishonoured by the superstitious mists with which Christianity clouded his perfections. Whether they had not as yet been given over to a reprobate mind, to disbelieve that which none but the "fool" can disbelieve, or whether they did not

think the public mind ripe for the admission of the last abomination, is unimportant to the fact. The latter was, doubtless, the case in the majority of instances; but, as their opinions struck root, flourished, and bore seed, they unveiled their esoteric blasphemies, and, unconsciously fulfilling the declaration of Him whom they insanely combated, proved that, "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."¹ At length they had confidence enough to promulgate their views in the national legislature, and offer them for the national adoption. Their organ was M. Jacob Dupont, and the occasion chosen for the purpose was the national establishment of schools for the education of youth. The principle of these was to be the studious exclusion of religion,—a principle invariably adopted by all speculatists on education whose object is the subversion of order and morality. Duquesnai and the "Economists," had long represented to Lewis XV. the expediency of taking the instruction of the people out of the hands of the clergy, and giving them a more enlarged and liberal education than could be expected, as they said, at the hands of ecclesiastics. The mechanics in towns, and the agricultural peasantry, languished, it was represented, for knowledge, which the college² and village school had not to impart. Mean time D'Alembert had organized his "committee of edu-

¹ John v. 23.

² It can scarcely be necessary to mention that the *colleges*, as they are termed, in France, are only foundation *schools*.

cation," and established an agency so extensive throughout the whole of France, that scarcely a step was taken in tuition, from the appointment of a parish schoolmaster to that of a professor in a college, or a tutor in a family, without the interference or cognizance of the infidel committee. By the vigilance of a faithful minister, the king had become acquainted with this conspiracy against the souls of his subjects; but, though he did not sanction the schools of the Economists, he had adopted towards their advocates that spirit of false conciliation which only imboldens and enables bad men to prosecute their schemes, who, in this instance, not only subverted the throne of his successor, but lifted their hand against the altars of the King of kings. On the 14th of December, 1792, the real object of education without religion was avowed in the Convention. It was not the grave and more decent pretence of toleration, liberality, or the impossibility of amalgamating the education of different sects,—but it was the candid avowal, that no religion was to be taught, because—THERE WAS NONE!—"What! thrones are overturned! sceptres broken! kings expire! and yet—THE ALTARS OF GOD remain! Tyrants, in outrage to nature, continue to burn an impious incense on those altars! The thrones that have been reversed have left these altars naked, unsupported, and tottering. A single breath of enlightened reason will now be sufficient to make them disappear." "Nature and reason, these ought to be the gods of men! These are

my gods?" ["It is amusing, forsooth, to panegyryze a religion in which we are taught that it is better to obey God than men."¹] "For myself, I honestly avow to the Convention, *I am—AN ATHEIST!*"² Such were the actual words uttered by Dupont in the French National Convention, and received with all but unanimous applause!

The horrible oration, from which the above short extracts, not without shuddering, are transcribed, was widely circulated throughout England, and Mrs. More received not a few letters on the subject. In one from Lord Orford, published in his works, the following remarks occur: "I am not sure that you have not been still more shocked by a crime that passes even the guilt of shedding the blood of poor Lewis,—to hear of Atheism avowed, and the avowal tolerated by monsters calling themselves a National Assembly! But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such *inferno-human* beings, but must compose a

¹ The passage in brackets, although in the original, is not found in Mrs. More's translation, from which the English of the rest is given.

² "Quoi! les trônes sont renversés! les sceptres brisés! les rois expirent! et les autels de Dieu restent debout encore! Des tyrans, outrageants la nature, y brûlent un encens impie! Mais les trônes abbattus laissent cependant ces autels à nu, sans appui, et chancelans. Un souffle de la raison éclairée suffit pour les faire disparaître." "La nature et la raison, voilà les dieux de l'homme! voilà mes dieux!" "Il est plaisant, en effet, préconiser une religion dans laquelle on enseigne qu'il vaut mieux obéir à Dieu qu'aux hommes." "Je l'avouerai de bonne foi à la convention, je suis—ATHEE!"—*Discours de M. Dupont, Moniteur, Dec. 16, 1792.*

term that aims at conveying my idea of them ; for the future it will be sufficient to call them *the French*. I hope no other nation will ever deserve to be confounded with them." The subject being thus, in a manner, forced on Mrs. More's consideration, it occurred to her that, by publishing some remarks on this infamous speech, she might effect a twofold benefit,—expose the enormous wickedness of the party who then directed affairs in France, and increase the contributions to the maintenance of the unfortunate clergy of that country, driven by these votaries of "Reason" and "Nature," at peril of their lives, from their plundered and blood-stained homes, to the hospitable shores of Britain. Of this intention she made no secret ; and while employed on her task, she was thus again encouraged by her friend Lord Orford. "I am proud of having imitated you at a great distance, and been persuaded, much against my will and practice, to let my name be put to the second subscription for the poor French Clergy, as it was thought it might tend to animate that consumptive contribution. I am impatient for your pamphlet, not only as being yours, but hoping it will invigorate horror against French atheism, which, I am grieved to say, did not by any means make due impression. I did very early apply to your confessor,¹ to beg he would enjoin his clergy to denounce that shocking impiety." In the early part of 1793 the publication took

¹ The Bishop of London.

place under the title of "Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont." In this tract, Mrs. More pointed out, in her lucid and forcible style, the danger of all intercourse with a people who had nationally been given up to such blind profaneness; the importance of a national and individual self-scrutiny in England, lest kindred vices and negligences might conduct our country to the awful gulf into which they had already precipitated her neighbour; and the necessity of submitting to any sacrifices, and making any exertions, rather than permit such principles to obtain currency and influence in a hitherto Christian land. To the "Remarks" was prefixed, "A prefatory address to the Ladies, &c., of Great Britain, in behalf of the French Emigrant Clergy." It was Mrs. More's intention, as in other instances, to publish anonymously; but, on the strong remonstrance of the Bishop of London, she consented to prefix her name.

The dispersion of this tract was extensive, the profits of the sale amounting to about 240*l.*, which sum was paid to the committee for conducting the relief of the refugee ecclesiastics. On the 17th of May, 1793, at a meeting of the united committees of subscribers for that purpose, the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

"That the thanks of this committee be presented to Mrs. Hannah More, for having given up the profits of her excellent 'Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont,' to the use of the French Emigrant Clergy; and likewise for her elegant and pathetic address to the ladies of Great Bri-

tain in their behalf, by which she has doubly contributed to this charitable work ; and that the following extract from the same be published :

“ ‘ Christian charity is of no party. We plead, not for their faith, but for their wants. And let the more scrupulous, who look for their desert as well as distress in the objects of their bounty, bear in mind that if these men could have sacrificed their conscience to their convenience, they had not now been in this country. Let us show them the purity of our religion by the beneficence of our actions.’ ”

The amount of good procured to the unhappy exiles by this address, and to the souls of the people of England by the refutation of Dupont, are among “ the secret things ” which shall never be known till the counsels of all hearts shall be manifested. One advantage achieved was, undoubtedly, the disabuse of many amiable but mistaken persons, who, except upon evidence equal to demonstration, could not be brought to think so ill of human nature as to believe it capable of the follies and atrocities which common report attributed to the French authorities. The public butcheries and proscriptions were too notorious to be questioned, and it was equally certain that some of the men who directed the national affairs, were monsters of atrocity ; still many thought it incredible that an assembly, numbering a considerable proportion of educated men, could approve, however they might find it impossible to check, the enormities of a few brutal leaders, whom the

ferment of political commotion had thrown from the dregs of society to its surface. It was not sufficiently adverted to that a high degree of mental culture by no means necessarily involves immunity from the grossest errors in religion and morals, and that the pollutions which had characterized every stage of the French Revolution, could be referred to no more probable origin than the rejection of that God whom it so conspicuously dishonoured. While the infidel, the libertine, and the profligate beheld with apprehension the increasing disgust excited by the Jacobins through all gradations of British society, there was still a class of a very different description, who, discrediting the existence of a nation of atheists as an impossibility, and, consequently, as a mere factious exaggeration, gave the weight of their influence and respectability to the infidel and anarchical party in England. Several English periodicals in the interests of the revolutionists aided the delusion by advocating the cause in a style of great moderation, affecting, if not zeal, still regard for religion, and quoting the least offensive parts of Paine and Woolstoncraft, till well-intentioned but credulous people began to disbelieve the allegations of their better instructed and constitutional countrymen. The remarks on the speech of Dupont completely dispersed these errors. Great part of the speech was printed by Mrs. More with the remarks; and the date of the document, the reference to the French journal in which it appeared, and the account there given of the

applause that interrupted and followed it, left no room for skepticism, except in minds wilfully obstinate. The Christian favourers of the revolution deserted in disgust, and the line was drawn broadly in the right place,—between the friends and enemies of united truth and social order. It is supposed that the influence of this tract produced, in addition to the actual profits of sale, subscriptions to the amount of not less than 1000*l.* to the support of the emigrant clergy. Nor was the beneficence of Hannah More towards these victims of infidel intolerance limited to pleading their cause, and contributing, by the effort of her pen, a noble accession to their relief. For many years, while she spent the winters with her sisters at Bath, the house was constantly open to these unfortunate men, who always found there a hospitable welcome.

It could scarcely be expected that a tract so animated and popular as the *Remarks on Dupont* should be unopposed; and the character of those who were likely to oppose it would not naturally prepare us to expect the mildest description of opposition. Nothing can be more illustrative of Mrs. More's Christian temper than the following extract of a letter addressed to Mr. Cadell in August, 1793:—"I have had no less than three answers to the pamphlet; one *very abusive indeed*; but so diverting *that I have assisted the sale by causing my friends to buy it.*" I have never been able to meet with more than one of these replies, which is, evidently, written by a dissenter, and, apparently, a dissenting minister. It is not abu-

sive, but very heavy; and there is nothing in it approaching to what can be called "*diverting*," unless we should except two specimens of theology, which, however gravely intended, may perhaps prove not unamusing to the reader.

Mrs. More, in addressing the ladies of Great Britain in favour of the exiled ecclesiastics, had thus concluded:—"If you will permit me to press you upon such high motives (and it were to be wished that in every action we were to be influenced only by the highest,) perhaps no act of bounty to which you may be called out, can ever come so immediately and so literally under that solemn and affecting description which will be recorded in the great day of account,—'*I was a stranger, and ye took me in.*'"¹ The serious reply to this simple and Christian appeal is as follows:—"It is to be lamented that, while our benevolence is justly excited by their [the priests'] destitute circumstances, the intermixture of political opinions and prejudices into their case should so far warp your judgment, madam, as to consider these men the immediate representatives of Christ himself. '*I was a stranger, and ye took me in,*' are words appropriated to *the brethren of Christ*. All men stand not in this relation, otherwise none would be found at his left hand." It would have been curious if this writer had gone on to favour us with the requisites for entitling a stranger to admission on this ground, and the means whereby

¹ Matt. xxv. 35.

his readers should infallibly know who should be found at the left hand. In that case, his own little sect, and "the brethren of Christ," would have maintained, we may suspect, a tolerably strict identity. The *good Samaritan* is, upon this showing, a misnomer; for, believing, as he must have done, the Jew to be in grievous error, he ought to have known better than to treat him as a brother. We must conclude his "judgment" to have been "warped," and the precept, "Go and do thou likewise,"¹ to be utterly inapplicable to the enlightened days of Dupont.

The other observation of this champion of the new school of Christianity is that with which he concludes, and into which he seems to think he has thrown the whole force of his irresistible arguments. "I entreat you," is his language to Mrs. More, "to weigh the advice of the wise and eloquent Jewish doctor, whenever you contemplate the affairs of the French nation. 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for, if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.' " To represent the work of the French *exterminators* of Christianity in the words applied to its first *propagators*, and to describe Mrs. More, when combating *Atheism* and *Atheists*, as *fighting against God*, is certainly an original line of argument. It is needless, perhaps, to indicate, that, by neces-

¹ Luke x. 37.

sary consequence, Dupont is a champion of the Deity, whose existence he impiously denies; and his speech, a valuable little manual of theology. It is impossible to doubt that arguments like these, with the reflecting and Christian people of England, urged home the simple and scriptural appeals of Hannah More with tenfold power. Such things are mentioned here as curiosities; for, although their absurdity, now that the effervescence which produced them has subsided, is manifest enough, there were not wanting then, among those who affected even a superiority both in liberality and enlightenment, such as seriously received such arguments as these for Christian charity and sound logic.

Among the benefits which it pleased the gracious Author of Christianity to derive to England from the country which denied His very existence, was a far clearer knowledge of the proofs on which the credit of His revelation rests. There were then in our country three numerous classes. One of these consisted of pious Christians, who possessed, indeed, the practical evidence of the truth of their religion, in that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and in its perfect adaptation to their wants and infirmities; but still were unable to give a reason of the hope that was in them, calculated to meet the cavils of the infidel. Another class was that of merely professed and nominal Christians, who were such only because they were born in a Christian country, who had no doubt of the truth of their religion, simply because

they had never thought on the subject, and who, consequently, would fall before an objection which a mere tyro in Christian evidence would despise. The third class was composed of actual waverers; men superficially acquainted with their Bible, imbued with the objections of the English infidels, especially the latest and most insidious, Hume and Gibbon, and regarding a small tinge of infidelity as a mark of difference from the vulgar, and giving them an air of enlightened superiority to credulity and superstition. To all these classes it might seem that the doctrines of the French sophists would be formidable, if not fatal. But God left not himself without witness. In the universities of our land, fenced by the cautious appointments of elder wisdom from the intrusion of heresy and schism, the pure deposit of the Christian record was religiously guarded by profound and varied learning. In the church, deriving its supplies from those untainted springs, the same holy truths were preserved under the same tutelage. Accordingly, the press, the lecture-room, and the pulpit, became every where vocal with the evidences of Christianity, which, but for this aggression on revelation, would never have been called into public notice. The simple were confirmed; the thoughtless were instructed; the free-thinking coxcomb found out that Christianity had learning on its side; and that it was, consequently, no mark of superior information to disparage it. A more enlightened and more zealous Christianity immediately succeeded. Nor did that generation alone.

reap the benefit of those Christian efforts which the assaults of the French revolutionists called forth. Works which will enlighten the Church to the end of time, the evidential writings of Paley and Porteus, to mention no others, were providentially raised from the chaos of the French atheism :

“ Νυκτὸς δ’ αὖτ’ αἶθηρ τε καὶ ἡμέρη ἐξεγίνοντο.”¹

The most difficult task, however, was that of introducing the evidences of Christianity to the uneducated, to the perversion of whom the arts of the revolutionists were especially directed. An objection, which no person of ordinary Christian education could fail to confute as soon as uttered, was wholly unanswerable by the ignorant, who, even when apprized, required more time to comprehend the answer, than would suffice for imbibing a hundred infidel sophisms. The anti-religious writings of Paine are exactly of this kind; utterly innocuous to all readers of the smallest information,—dangerous in the extreme to the uninformed. Bishop Watson, in his admirable “Apology,” had done good service by the demolition of “The Age of Reason.” But his excellent tract was, after all, directed only against a particular work. Something was wanted which might at once instruct the poor, and put them on their guard; something which would enter into their habits of argument; something which would come

¹ Hesiod. Theog. 124.

home 'to their feelings, by which they are much more influenced than by even the simplest and clearest reasoning; something which would, in their minds, dispose of the whole question; something which would anticipate the enemy on his own ground, and rescue the poor on their own principles.

It was impossible not to see in the "Village Politics" the eminent capability of Hannah More to render such a service; and none saw this more plainly than the first promoter of the good work, Bishop Porteus, who earnestly entreated her that, as she had already confuted the anarchists by "Village Politics," she would now meet the infidels by a "Village Christianity." This suggestion was not *exactly* complied with; but to it, it is probable, we are indebted for the first idea of those admirable and valuable tracts which constitute "The Cheap Repository," a work which will be read and admired equally by the most unlettered and the most accomplished, while the English, and the various languages into which it has been translated, shall exist. Almost all the tracts of which it is composed have been republished by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and form a principal part of many an English cottager's library.

If the Bishop of London had the honour of suggesting the *idea* of the Cheap Repository, it is scarcely questionable that for the method and manner Mrs. More was again under obligation to Mrs. Trimmer, of whose "Family Magazine" the

Cheap Repository is almost a continuation. Having outrivalled her in her schools, Mrs. More felt encouraged to emulate her tracts; believing that she could, in this way, most effectively attain the purpose in contemplation,—to convey to the poor just notions of Christian evidence and obligations, in a vehicle at once intelligible and agreeable.¹ In conjunction with her sisters, and aided by some eminent literary persons, she arranged to publish every month a tale, a ballad, and a tract for Sunday reading. Sarah and Martha alone assisted in the literary part, the others helped with their purses. The tracts by Hannah are signed Z; those of Sarah, S.² Songs and tracts had been to a great extent influential in the corruption of the lower orders of France, and the same machinery was now worked by the revolutionists of England. It seemed therefore wise to employ this kind of weapon against the cause it had hitherto been principally instrumental to support. While hesi-

¹ "To teach the poor to read; without providing them with *safe* books, has always appeared to me an improper measure; and this induced me to the laborious undertaking of the *Cheap Repository Tracts*."—Mrs. More's letter to Bishop Beadon. It may be worth while here to notice a coincident sentiment of Sir Walter Scott:—"To make boys learn to read, and then place no good books within their reach, is to give them an appetite, and leave nothing in the pantry, save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve."—*Scott's Journal in Lockhart's Life*, vol. vi. chap. iv.

² It is, perhaps, needless to observe that the literary assistance granted to Mrs. More in the Cheap Repository was the contribution of *entire* pieces exclusively.

tating as to the expediency or probable utility of the design, she had a conversation at Bath with the Bishop of Dol, who afterwards fell by the guillotine. "Penny papers," said he, "might have saved France, and so I told the king." This at once decided and encouraged her. Penny papers unquestionably contributed to the salvation of England; and none were more blessed to that object than those of Hannah More.

In reply to a letter which accompanied a prospectus of this work, Lord Orford writes, "Thank you a thousand times for your most ingenious plan! may great success reward you!" "I repeated some of the facts you told me of the foul fiends and their anti-More activity. I sent to Mr. White for a dozen more of your plans, and will distribute them wherever I have hopes of their taking root and blossoming. To-morrow I will send him my subscription, and I flatter myself you will not think it a breach of Sunday; nor will I make this long that I may not widen that fracture. Good night! How calm and comfortable must be your slumbers on the pillow of every day's good deeds!"

In 1795 appeared the first number of "The Cheap Repository." The title seems to have been selected as an invitation to the class whose especial profit was contemplated; and it was an object with the sisters to reduce the price below that of the infidel and Jacobinical trash, which was then so current in the market. For this purpose, a continued subscription was necessary; nor was any difficulty found in procuring the assistance

required. The French committee had conducted their perversion of the lower orders by large gratuitous issues of their publications to country hawkers and pedlars; and it was thought that such a disposal of the Cheap Repository tracts would not be inexpedient. Two committees, accordingly, were formed in London for the dispersion of the work, and every encouragement was given by the bishops, clergy, and all friends of religion and order. In particular, the Bishop of London assisted and encouraged the circulation, which was, perhaps, unprecedented, two millions being sold in the first year of publication.

The tales of the Cheap Repository bear so manifestly the stamp of nature and truth, that it cannot be doubted that many of them are little more than a narrative of facts. That, for instance, of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, is well known to be the detail of a real transaction. The "Mr. Johnson" is Sir James Stonhouse; the shepherd's name was Saunders; and his simple cottage on Cherril Down, Wilts, represented in the vignette, is still pointed out to the traveller as a classical spot. In "The Sunday School," and "Hester Wilmot," we have a picture, little embellished, and not at all overcharged, of the opposition which Mrs. More had to encounter among farmers and parents, and of the steady and prudent policy by which it was overborne. "Mrs. Jones" appears nearly related to "Mrs. Andrews," the heroine of the Family Magazine. In "The Two Wealthy Farmers" we have the description of both the

evil and the good, which Mrs. More found in the agricultural classes; and it is not unlikely that her adventures at Wedmore supplied some features to the admirable picture of "Tawny Rachel." It is probable that the *name* of Hester Wilmot was suggested by those of MM. Hester and Wilmot respectively, the secretary and chairman of the united committees for the relief of the French clergy. "Mr. Fantom" had, doubtless, many prototypes in the class of petty shopkeepers; among whom, whatever may have been the cause, discontent, self-conceit, and extravagances in religion and politics, were too frequently found, and often in direct proportion to the worldly prosperity of the individual. The study was easily met with; but the picture required the hand of a consummate artist. Never did Rembrandt dispose his lights and shadows with more artful and powerful effect, than Mrs. More, in her delineation of Mr. Fantom. "A mind at once shallow and inquisitive, speculative and vain, ambitious and dissatisfied." "He prated about narrowness and ignorance, and bigotry, and prejudice, and priestcraft, and tyranny, on the one hand; and, on the other, of public good, the love of mankind, and liberality, and candour, and toleration, and, above all, benevolence." "The more the word *liberality* was in his mouth, the more did selfishness gain dominion in his heart." "A life of talking, and reading, and writing, and disputing, and teaching, and proselyting, now struck him as the only life." "The object of a

true philosopher," he says, "is to diffuse light and knowledge. I wish to see the whole world enlightened." Yet this enlightened philanthropist neglects every duty of common humanity, leaves his neighbour's cottage and children to burn, while he is devising means of extinguishing the fires of the Inquisition, and plunges his family and household into worse than pagan ignorance, till one of his servants, following out practically his master's *philosophy*, first robs the philosopher himself, and next earns, by murder, his title of the gallows. The rich vein of satire which throughout chastises the folly of ignorant and arrogant presumption can only be equalled by the awful and tragic solemnity in which the grand moral is enforced, that the gospel is the only true enlightenment, and obedience to its precepts the highest philosophy. This tale, and the continuation published some years after, will be a valuable and instructive manual as long as such characters as Fantom shall prefer a brief, limited, and infamous notoriety, by wrecking the faith, hope, morals, and salvation of their fellow creatures, to that noble obscurity which is content to wait for fame till the great day which shall bring to the meanest follower of the Saviour a renown at once glorious, universal and immortal.

Lord Orford had wished Mrs. More to wind up her remarks on Dupont by a notice of the fate of Manuel, then supposed to have been mortally wounded by some of his own accomplices in butchery. The progress of affairs in France had

increased the number of similar victims, and Lord Orford again urged Mrs. More to notice this providential retribution in her Cheap Repository. The hand of Providence was undoubtedly acknowledged by her in all the set transactions; and if a scheme of temporal retribution yet linger upon earth, the crime of murder appears to be the occasion of its exercise; while murders so horrible as those which marked the track of the French revolution, perpetrated too in open rejection of His authority and existence who has declared that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,"¹ might well seem to warrant extraordinary interpositions; and the deaths of the monsters who had wrought them, brought about by inventions and creatures of their own, might, without superstition or irreverence, appear referrible to those cases where "the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;" when "the earth also shall disclose her *blood*, and shall no more cover her *slain*."² Mrs. More, however, probably reverted in thought to the massacre of the Galileans and the tower of Siloam,³ and forbore to avail herself of the moral, though every tale is conducted with strict dramatic justice, and uniformly presents sin and misery as cause and effect.

Not the least curious feature of this publication is the complete acquaintance with cottage economy which it exhibits, at a time when the knowledge

1 Gen. ix. 6. 2 Isa. xxvi. 21. 3 See Luke, xiii. 1, *seq.*

of that science was chiefly to be gained by experience and reflection. By some it is commonly received as indisputable that a literary woman must be a bad economist; and it may be readily allowed that a *passion* for literature, like a *passion* for dress or dissipation, or any thing else, may estrange a woman from the knowledge of household affairs. Such, however, was not the case in the instance of Hannah More. In the "Cure for Melancholy" we have a series of cheap plans for ameliorating the condition of the poor, which must have been the result of careful consideration, and which, in all probability, Mrs. More, to whom her heroine Mrs. Jones bears close resemblance, had actually practised herself; while in "The Way to Plenty" the poor are instructed how to make the best of their means, and receipts for cheap dishes are furnished, which Mrs. More must have partly gained by inquiry among the cottagers, or invented and tried herself, although she was, in all probability, indebted for some suggestions to Mrs. Trimmer's "Economy of Charity," particularly for the idea of the soup-kitchen. Certain it is that the benefits of the Cheap Repository were not exclusively religious and political. By it the poor were taught, during the scarcity of 1795, to economize where they had been accustomed to waste; a lesson of more value than the large sums which Mrs. More actually disbursed in charitable objects; and, doubtless, many an honest labourer had reason to bless the name of Hannah More, for finding, through the exercise of an

economy of which he had before entertained no conception, more comforts in a season of dearth than he had ever been able to enjoy before in years of the greatest abundance.

No production of Hannah More had so much evinced the flexibility of her genius, or inculcated so widely and forcibly the good principles it was written to maintain, as the Cheap Repository. It became a favourite with high and low, educated and unlearned. It was soon necessary to bring it out in two forms; one for the hawkers, and a superior style of print and paper for the higher classes. Many important moral results were directly traceable to its influence. At Bath, the colliers had organized operations for a direct attack on the mills, and afterwards on private property, when, by the timely distribution of the ballad of "The Riot" among them, they were convinced of their folly, and abandoned their design. The same ballad was also instrumental in suppressing a tumult at Hull. The Repository was actively disseminated by all friends of order and morality; it was forthwith translated into the French and Russian languages. The government itself saw its great importance; and it is probably to this and her other anti-revolutionary productions, that Mrs. More chiefly owed her introduction to the Duchess of Gloucester, who always remained her warm friend and patroness; and hence her acquaintance with the Royal Family, on which subject more will be said presently.

Though not, perhaps, the most valuable of the testimonies received by Mrs. More on this occasion, not the least curious, certainly, is that of the

late William Cobbett, with whom, at that time, religion and social order happened to be in favour. He wrote from America, requesting a copy of the Cheap Repository, which Mrs. More immediately sent to him. The following is his acknowledgment, which, as never having yet, so far as I am aware, been published, the reader may not deem unacceptable :

“ My dear Madam,

“ The Repository I have read with delight. Though a father, I find I am not too old to stand in need of the learning to be acquired from such lessons. They must have produced infinite good in Britain. I trust they will contribute largely to render the succeeding generations better than the present, and to preserve *our* country from the dreadful scourge which we have seen immorality and irreligion bring on so many of her neighbours. It is a blessing almost peculiar to our favoured island to produce numbers of persons of extensive benevolence and indefatigable industry in its pursuit; but among them all, that have come to my knowledge, I know not one who has a higher claim to *pre-eminence* than *yourself*. For my part, Madam, I shall ever think you entitled to my respect and gratitude. My children and those of my brethren may probably owe their happiness here and hereafter to your incomparable efforts. May your life be unembittered with sickness or sorrow, and may it be prolonged till you have seen your labours rewarded by the reformed *morals* of those for whom you have written. I have the honour to be, with the most sincere respect, Madam,

“ Your obliged and humble servant,

“ WILLIAM COBBETT.”

During the publication of the Cheap Repository, Mrs. More had the misfortune to lose one of those friends who had most powerfully encouraged and assisted it,—the Earl of Orford; with whom she had maintained a close friendship and correspondence for more than twenty years. This connexion has been made matter of reproach to

Hannah More, both by friends and enemies; her admirers thinking it unworthy of one whose character and sentiments were so different from his; while her adversaries would infer an inconsistency between her principles and professions. But Mrs. More's conduct is capable of a very easy vindication. Mr. Walpole, from the first occasion when he met Miss More in the society to which his connexions and literary pursuits introduced him, had entertained the highest esteem for her character and talents, and received the greatest delight in her conversation. His demeanour towards her was ever most courteous, gentlemanly, and respectful, and it would have been more difficult to justify her had she met this behaviour otherwise than she did. Had there, indeed, been any compromise,—any qualification of her views to conciliate his approbation by the sacrifice even of a shadow of principle, defence would have been impossible. But the fact was notoriously otherwise. She was so far from lowering the tone of her religion, or countenancing his religious apathy, that she studiously omitted no occasion of preventing mistake on the subject. Her walk in the eye of the great had always been a living commentary on her "Thoughts on their Manners," and "Estimate of their Religion." With Christian prudence, indeed, she did not perpetually obtrude on Mr. Walpole the subject of religion; and those who would complain that she does not write alike to him and Mr. Wilberforce, are rather well meaning than judicious. A religious letter would probably have appeared to the superficial flutterer

nothing more than cant and vulgarity; and disgusted with the author, and especially with her religion, he would have been only confirmed in his indolence and negligence. Her views were known to Mr. Walpole, through books, which left no room for retreat or equivocation; through her scrupulous sanctification of the Sabbath under all circumstances, and in defiance of all obstacles; and, above all, through an heroic beneficence, to which captiousness itself could take no exceptions. These things were, indeed, likely to dispose her flippant friend to serious views; and the wisdom of her course appeared in the result. While the absence of all compromise on her part is evident in the bantering style in which he addresses her,¹ the respect with which her virtues had inspired him is no less evident in the language which he holds to her,² and in the readiness with which he always contributed to the furtherance of her plans of philanthropy. To Mrs. More he was indebted for his introduction to the excellent Bishop Porteus, in whose life and conversation Christianity beamed with her cheerful native lustre, and whose intercourse, which Lord Orford highly valued, was every way calculated to benefit him. In Hannah More and Bishop Porteus he had the opportunity of seeing that the most implicit faith and the most devoted zeal in Christianity could consist with the highest mental attainments; and that the

¹ "My dear Saint Hannah," "My holy Hannah," &c.

² "Most excellent of women," &c.

most devoted piety was no obstacle to cheerfulness and humour. That the friendship of Mrs. More and of the Bishop of London was productive of spiritual advantage to Lord Orford, there is every reason to believe; and, were it otherwise, it were equally unjust to Mrs. More and the Bishop, to blame either for maintaining an intimacy likely to operate such a result. Certain it is that the most pious and steadfast Christian in England could not be more revolted by the blasphemies of the French infidels, than was Lord Orford. One of his latest acts, indeed, towards Mrs. More proves the influence which she had acquired, the respect which her principles had elicited, and the good which she had wrought. He informed her by letter that by her he had been first led to read and *study* the Scriptures; and at the same time presented her with a Bible, dedicated with the following inscription:

To his excellent Friend
Miss Hannah More,
this Book;
which he knows to be the dearest Object of her Study,
and by which,
to the great comfort and relief
of numberless afflicted and distressed Individuals,
she has profited beyond any person with whom he is acquainted;
is offered,
as a mark of his esteem and gratitude,
by her sincere
and obliged humble Servant,
Horace, Earl of Orford,
1795.¹

¹ This inscription has been very obligingly communicated to me by Lord Teignmouth, in whose possession the Bible now is.

The Cheap Repository was closed in 1798, Mrs. More finding the labour greater than her constitution could sustain. Not only was she, as we have seen, during all this time conducting several parochial and Sunday schools, but she had even been engaged for some years¹ in another important literary undertaking.

From the critical point of Mrs. More's life, at which she had resolved on the solemn dedication of all her powers to the glory of her God, through the promotion of a reformed education in all classes, she seems to have projected an express treatise on the instruction of the upper and middle ranks of her own sex. In the third chapter of her "Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World," she had adverted with distinctness and decision to the prevalent defects in the education of young men; but female education was far more defective, and the province more appropriate; nor were the consequences involved fewer or less important. Her schools for the poor, and her observations on the general education of the higher orders, were parts of a great system which needed completion only in a specific treatise on female education. Her experience from childhood had exhibited to her at once the nature and remedy of popular errors on this subject; and the progress of the French Revolution had conferred on her

¹ It appears from notes (Works, vol. v p. 3, 69, &c.,) that the "Strictures on Female Education," had been begun "*early* in the French Revolution."

theories on education the character almost of an experimental philosophy. It had long been the aim of the French infidels to corrupt their countrywomen; sensible that, while piety and virtue were invested with female attractions, they could never be altogether eradicated from the bosom of man. Refined and sublimated licentiousness for the Court and the drawing-room had been supplied by Rousseau; brutal grossness, for the plain vulgar of town and country, was the contribution of Voltaire. With this corruption was skilfully blended a proportional admixture of antichristian scoffs and blasphemies. It had been also a part of the infidel tactics to enlist as adepts women of influential rank, but abandoned character. A Bareith, a Du Deffand, and a D'Epinay, with several others, had been taken into the cabal, and had zealously promoted the depravation of their sex, and through that, the perversion of the other. One English female had voluntarily proclaimed herself a member of this alliance, and maintained in print the "rights" of her sex to reject their Bible, and follow no other guide than their wills and passions. Had the women of England become generally infected with the contagion, the total subversion of British religion and morals would have been inevitable; while the pious fulfilment of the important task assigned them in the economy of Providence would go far to retain, secured in the sacred treasure of the social affections, the allegiance of father and husband, of brother and son, to the Father and Husband of his people,—to

Him who styles himself the Son of Man, and who is not ashamed to call his followers brethren. Adverting to these important consequences, and to the direction imparted to female influence by early discipline, Mrs. More instituted a searching and methodical inquiry into the objects of female education, and the proper means of attaining them. The principle of her reformation was to urge the cultivation of the mind rather than that of the body; of the soul rather than of the mind; and that of all for their proper destination; a course exactly the converse of that which had been popularly adopted in Mrs. More's early days, and which was far from extinct in the middle season of her life, if indeed it be so to be considered now. Her aim was to recall woman to the purpose of her being; to train her, so far as possible in this fallen state, to be (as she was designed) the image of her Creator, and "a help meet" for man. These objects had been neglected, and even opposed, in the female education of the day: and Mrs. More would have accomplished inestimable good, if she had only trained for quiet fireside happiness one immortal being, otherwise devoted to such misery as Pope's stern but faithful pencil has portrayed;¹ at once unhappy and mischievous; while, when contemplated as formed for eternity, the most melancholy spectacle imaginable; who, after having spent the prime of life in the restless enjoyment of

1 "Yet mark the end of a whole sex of queens," &c.—

See *Moral Essays*, Ep. ii. 219--248.

self-admiration, and pursuit of the admiration of others, has at length reached the period when vanity itself can scarcely afford one consolatory whisper; when the mind has stored no refuge from such jeers as she was herself once wont to cast on those whom she now resembles; and when memory is opposed to hope, presenting no account of treasure accumulated for the eternal world, but only at best blanks of indolence, broken by records of folly. If Mrs. More be thought, in her "Strictures," to have depreciated some external accomplishments, it must be remembered that the exaggeration of their importance had been the great source of perversion in the female education of her time; that her aim was neither to banish them, nor to detract from their real value; but only to place them in just subordination to those essential and sterling qualifications which the system of the day neglected altogether, or imparted very inadequately.¹ A mind enriched and enlarged with

¹ The following passage is only one of many which ought to have precluded all mistake on the subject of Mrs. More's intentions. "Let me not, however, be misunderstood. The customs which fashion has established, when they are not in opposition to what is right, when they are not hostile to virtue, should unquestionably be pursued in the education of ladies. Piety maintains no natural war with elegance, and Christianity would be no gainer by making her disciples unamiable. Religion does not forbid that the exterior be made, *to a certain degree*, the object of attention; but the admiration bestowed, the sums expended, and the time lavished, on arts which add little to the intrinsic value of life, should have limitations. While these arts should be admired, let them not be admired *above their just value*; while they are practised, let it not be *to the exclusion of higher*

true knowledge,—the knowledge of facts and of real life; with history, biography, travels; purified by all that is tender, beautiful, and elevated in poetry, yet invigorated by the study of a few choice masters of argument and reflection, would, surely, be more worthily and beneficially educated, than if suffered to let its powers run to waste in mere ornamental acquirements, or to imbibe from mischievous novels and romances false views of life and perversions of sentiment, incapacitating their miserable victim alike for the enjoyment and the communication of happiness. And if a rational education was necessary for rational beings, a spiritual education was still more indispensable for spiritual creatures; a truth, perhaps, though so

employment; while they are cultivated, let it be to amuse leisure, not to engross life.”—*Strictures on Female Education*, Chap. iii. (Works, vol. v. p. 60.) While I am writing this, a letter from a lady who was educated in the Misses More's school, affords a characteristic illustration of Hannah More's views on the subject of external accomplishments at a very early period. The anecdote shall be given in the writer's own words. “A young lady was placed with the Misses More for education. Her eldest sister (who gave the relation herself) was invited to spend some time with them as a visiter. She had attained to considerable excellence in drawing, and as often as her drawings were exhibited, they drew forth much admiration. One person there always was present, who observed a strict silence, much to the mortification of the young artist; and that person was Hannah More. One morning this young lady made her appearance rather late at the breakfast-table. Her apology was this, that she had been occupied in *putting a new binding on her petticoat*. Mrs. Hannah More, fixing her brilliant eyes upon her with an expression of entire approbation, said, ‘Now, my dear, I find you can employ yourself *usefully*, I will no longer forbear to express my admiration of your drawings.’”

little regarded in practice, sufficiently self-evident to all who admitted the reality of Christianity; but forced at that time on the attention of some, at least, even of the most thoughtless, by the pressure of events in France, which Mrs. More has finely converted to her great purpose in her stirring address to the matrons of the land: "Let that very period which is desecrated in a neighbouring country by a formal renunciation of religion, be solemnly marked by you to purposes diametrically opposite. Let that dishonoured era, in which *they* avowed their resolution to exclude Christianity from the national education, be the precise moment seized upon by *you* for its more sedulous inculcation; and while *their* children are systematically trained to 'live without God in the world,' let *yours*, with a more decided emphasis, be consecrated to promote his glory in it."¹

Such was the object of the work on which, from the commencement of the infidel demonstrations in France, the leisure and labour of Mrs. More had been expended; and in order that she might lay a deep and broad foundation for so weighty a structure, she has, in her concluding chapters, presented us with the most copious and elaborate explication of the Christian faith to be found in her writings; while, to complete her scheme of right belief and pure practice, she has been earnest to insist on the devotional part of the Christian character, and has entered at great length on the

¹ Strictures on Female Education, ch. i. (Works, vol. v. p. 32.)

important subject of prayer, the distinguishing mark of the genuine and spiritual Christian, to say nothing of its important consequences.

Mrs. More's habit was always to work to the extent of her powers, both of body and mind: and her abandonment of the Cheap Repository was a sufficient reason to all who knew her for apprehending that her health had been more seriously affected by her multifarious and incessant labours than she was disposed to allow. The effects of these combined exertions on her frame had been, indeed, very injurious. She sometimes suffered, for whole successive days and nights, the most terrific spasms in the head. On one occasion she was found by her sisters lying on her face, with her head against the wall of the apartment, bleeding, and apparently dead. She had become insensible from the violence of the paroxysm, and had fallen from her seat.

In 1799 Mrs. More's great work on Female Education appeared. It was intended, like its predecessors of the same family, to be published anonymously; but, at the suggestion of Mr. Alderman Cadell, Mrs. More consented to claim the authorship. It was originally to have been entitled, "Strictures on the Manners of Women of Rank and Fortune;" but it was ultimately designated, "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, with a view of the Principles and Conduct prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune." Nothing could be more gratifying to the authoress than the reception of her labours.

Congratulations and compliments arrived from almost every name of religious or literary distinction; not a few from nobility, and even from Royalty. The Duchess (afterwards Queen) of Würtemberg openly avowed her intention of applying it to the education of the Duke's daughters. The work passed through thirteen editions, seven of which were printed in the year of its publication; and 19,000 copies have been printed in all.

Among the honours paid to this work, was one of a rather unusual character,—a formal recommendation in an episcopal charge. Of this, and of the Cheap Repository, Bishop Porteus thus speaks to his clergy:—

“Mrs. Hannah More, whose extraordinary and versatile talents can equally accommodate themselves to the cottage and the palace; who, while she is diffusing among the lower orders of the people an infinity of little religious tracts, calculated to reform and comfort them in this world, and to save them in the next, is, at the same time, applying all the powers of a vigorous and highly-cultivated mind to the instruction, improvement, and delight of the most exalted of her own sex. I allude more particularly to her last work on Female Education, which presents to the reader such a fund of good sense, of wholesome counsel, of sagacious observation, of a knowledge of the world and of the female heart, of high-toned morality, and genuine Christian piety, and all this enlivened with such brilliancy of wit, such richness of imagery, such variety and felicity of allusion,

such neatness and elegance of diction, as are not, I conceive, easily to be found combined and blended together in any other work in the English language.

“Of her little tracts no less than two millions were sold in the first year; and they contributed, I am persuaded, very essentially to counteract the poison of those impious and immoral pamphlets which, as I have already stated, were dispersed over the kingdom in such numbers by societies of infidels and republicans.”

Notwithstanding the great popularity of the “*Strictures*,” and the high recommendations under which it appeared, one passage did not escape without public animadversion from a friendly quarter. The Rev. Charles Daubeny, minister of Christchurch, Bath, and afterwards Archdeacon of Sarum, published a letter to Mrs. More, remonstrating on the tendency of a position laid down in the 20th chapter, that the duties of Christians grow out of its doctrines, “as the natural and *necessary* productions of such a living root.”¹ This statement Mr. Daubeny impugned as unscriptural, and leading to the conclusion, that, belief once established, works would so necessarily ensue, that any care upon the subject would be superfluous. Mr. Daubeny’s letter, written in the mildest and most Christian tone, and expressing the highest admiration of Mrs. More and her services to her church and country, was met by

¹ Works, vol. v. p. 418.

some of her friends in a very different spirit; and ignorance of Scripture and of the articles of the Church, "illiberality," "peevish jealousy," "absurdity," and many qualities of equal excellence, imputed to its writer without reserve, in a strain betraying more of party acrimony against Mr. Daubeny than of solicitude for the credit of Mrs. More, of whose character and writings the learned author of "The Guide to the Church" was an avowed and zealous admirer.¹ It is certain, indeed, that Mrs. More never intended to affirm the proposition which Mr. Daubeny opposes; and Mr. Daubeny did not hesitate to admit that such was his belief from her recorded opinions elsewhere. "Convinced as I am," he says, "from the tenour of your writing, that we are *in perfect*

¹ "The language of flattery, Madam, is not the language in which I profess to deal. It is neither consistent with my character as a minister, nor is it suited to my way of thinking as a man. When I say, therefore, that it must have been my own fault had I not, upon the perusal of your writings from time to time, derived both pleasure and edification, I hope to be understood as speaking the plain truth."—*Daubeny's Letter to Mrs. More*, p. 1. "No one who regards this lady [Mrs. More] with the respect to which she is entitled for her zeal for the honour of God and the welfare of the community, but must remark with reluctance, that in writings confessedly containing so much of what is excellent and truly spiritual any doctrine should be met with not perfectly sound."—*Appendix to Guide to the Church, concluding letter*. To treat a man who could write thus as an envious defamer of Hannah More was any thing but liberality, or, indeed, justice. To prejudice Mrs. More against him was worse. It is painful to reflect that one who did both these was worthy to have mediated, in a spirit more his own, even between Daubeny and Hannah More.

"Who would not weep, if Articus were he?"

unison on the general subject of Christianity, it was not without sensible disappointment that I met with *a page* which conveyed to me a discordant sound. From the very decided language to be met with in some parts of your book, I am fully persuaded that on the doctrine of faith and works *there can be no real difference between us*; a circumstance which leads me to wish that we were as perfectly agreed in our *expressions* relative to it; for I am inclined to think that errors on this subject have been derived more from want of precision in language than from want of correctness in ideas." "It may be said, and with truth, that the general tenour of your publication is calculated to counteract an erroneous conclusion that may be drawn from one particular part of it, and that the decisive language contained in your 19th chapter in favour of Christian practice, considered as what ought to be the constant object of Christian endeavour, precludes all apprehension of danger from the contrary conclusion. For this very reason, Madam, it were to be wished that no such part was to be found from which it was possible that a contrary conclusion could be drawn; because there are some readers who will pay more attention to one single passage that appears to favour their own preconceived opinions, whatever they may be, than to all the other passages in a book put together."¹ It was not, then, because Mr. Daubeny did not understand Mrs. More, but

¹ Daubeny's Letter, pp. 3, 43, 47.

because he thought she had expressed herself in a manner calculated to sap the foundation of the very doctrines she was inculcating, that he remonstrated against her phraseology. When the high and just influence of Mrs. More in the religious world is taken into the question; when the extensive circulation of the particular work is regarded; when it is recollected that the 20th chapter of the "Strictures" is a deliberate confession of the author's faith, and the authority to which she referred all her friends for the knowledge of her religious opinions,—it seems somewhat hard measure to charge with illiberality and jealousy a man who had taken a vow "with all faithful diligence to banish and to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines,"¹ if he ventured to point out, in such a book, a passage which he conscientiously deemed to be of dangerous tendency,²—especially as the doctrine which appeared to him to be expressed in it was actually that of a considerable and increasing school of religionists.

The proposition in question was evidently intended by Mrs. More to be none other than that of the 12th article of the Church, as is clear from

¹ Ordination Service.

² "It would be no credit either to my profession or understanding to possess a wish to find fault without having a reason that justified me to myself in so doing. The reason, in the present case has been furnished by the decisive approbation which has accompanied your work, on the consideration that in proportion to the excellence of a publication will be the effect of any error that may be contained in it."—*Daubeny's Letter*, p. 45.

that article being quoted in a note in subsequent editions; still the *language* is far from identical. In the article, good works “spring out *necessarily* of *a true and lively faith* :” in Mrs. More’s statement they “grow out of *the doctrines* as natural and *necessary* productions.” A simple admission of *the doctrines*, therefore, would not only involve the obligation of the duties by logical consequence, but their practice by an imperious necessity. To remark this slight inaccuracy of *language*, where the true meaning is easily inferred from an ample context, would be hypercritical, except on a subject of such supreme importance as religious truth. It is probable, indeed, that the general bearing of Mrs. More’s work secured her meaning from any very extensive misconception. Mr. Daubeny, however, anticipated differently, and acted accordingly; and it is from a sense of justice to the memory of a pious Christian, a profound divine, a conscientious pastor of Christ’s flock, and an invincible champion of his Church, as well as one who admired and *resembled* Hannah More,¹

¹ Mr. Daubeny’s exertions at North Bradley, his evening lectures, Sunday schools, &c., and the courses taken by brutal rustics and fanatical sectarians to thwart him, where even his buildings and plantations were destroyed through a simple hostility to civilization, form a complete parallel to Mrs. More’s Cheddar and Wedmore adventures; while his munificent charities, his almshouses and his poorhouse, may compare even with her acts of beneficence. But the similitude is no where more complete than in his zeal for the religious benefit of the poor; the erection of the first free church in this country, containing 1,360 seats, being the result of his exertions.

that this notice has been extended. Whatever may be thought of the merits of Mr. Daubeny's argument, surely there ought to be but one opinion in regard to those of his motives. The conclusion of his letter is a perfect exemplification of that personal humility and official boldness in the clergyman which can be combined in no other character than the true Christian minister. "In making the foregoing remarks, Madam, I have, in my own judgment, discharged a duty. At the same time, when I consider that your late publication has received a public testimony of approbation from one of the most distinguished prelates of our Church, it is not without a mixture of diffidence and respect due to so high an authority that I venture to submit them to your consideration. Conscious, however, of the integrity of my intention, it is not so much my wish that my interpretation of St. Paul be the true one, as that such interpretation may be established, which, in the judgment of pious and learned Christians, will do most justice to the Apostle's argument. As a fallible man, I shall readily acknowledge obligation to the person who shall convince me that I have been in error; being *desirous of taking a leaf out of any book whose object it is, by the propagation of Scripture doctrine, to promote what every minister of Christ ought to have at heart, the grand design of the GOSPEL DISPENSATION.*"

The influence of the "Strictures on Female Education" is incalculable. Nineteen thousand copies, where every copy had at least a score of readers,

could not have been printed in vain. But, indeed, we have only to glance at the improved state of female education at the present day, to form some estimate of the effect of this book. The ardour for external accomplishments has not, perhaps, been greatly diminished; but the tone of female education, both intellectual and religious, has been materially raised. Even this view alone would afford only imperfect justice to the fruits of the "Strictures." Female education is an ample territory, embracing so many provinces, and abutting on so many important regions of morals, that it was impossible even without any desire to transgress the legitimate limits of the subject, to improve it without great collateral benefits. In this small but comprehensive work, on which Mrs. More had expended the utmost care and labour, a moral picture of society was drawn, very different from what had been seen in that generation, and, by its native beauty and accommodation to all that religion, reason, and good sense approve, too pleasing not to excite imitative zeal. Amid all the faults with which the present century is too justly chargeable, it is no less justly entitled to the praise of a more manly and rational character than its predecessor;—a character powerfully sketched by the hand of Hannah More, after her own just and vigorous conceptions, and, doubtless, finished after the portraiture of those whom she chose for her intimates and associates; but, certainly, no copy of the popular countenance. Her pen is therefore believed, with good reason,

to have contributed essentially to the favourable portion of the contrast, in which the later of the centuries which she has adorned stands to its precursor; to have been a prime instrument in reclaiming public manners from frivolity and enervation to rational and intellectual dignity, no less than in recalling public morals to their true standard in scriptural Christianity. Hitherto her ethical system, like the earliest sunbeams, had shed light on the high places alone; but, with the close of the 18th century, it crossed the moral horizon, and, like the advancing sun, invested with impartial light the middle regions of the social landscape. The humbler walks of life she had already instructed on a different though no less effectual plan. Thus then had she drawn the chain of truth and virtue around the whole frame of society; and the applause of an admiring world was but the echo of a pure conscience. Like the wisest of men, she had dared to prefer wisdom to riches and honour; and like him, too, she had received the object of her desire, while riches and honour were superadded. Blest with the love of many friends, and, above all, with the peace of God, she might seem to be the happiest of human kind; but such periods of unqualified serenity suit not long our probationary condition. The cloud was gathering, and we must now pursue its rise,

R.A.

